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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7846th meeting

Monday, 19 December 2016, 4.10 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Martins
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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The meeting was called to order at 4.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: Before proceeding, I would like to offer my deepest condolences to the Russian delegation following the assassination of their colleague, Ambassador Andrey Karlov in Ankara, earlier today. I condemn that senseless act of terror, for which there can be no justification.

We are here to address one of the world's most urgent crises — the deteriorating situation South Sudan. Not long ago, the people of South Sudan were riding a wave of optimism. Africa's longest civil war had ended. The world's youngest nation was born. Yet today, all of that hope and promise has disappeared. South Sudan is engulfed in yet another civil war. Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed. The country's economy is in ruins. The social fabric is in tatters. Millions of people are homeless and displaced. Hunger and poverty have only deepened.

The responsibility for that tragic state of affairs lies squarely on the shoulders of South Sudan's leaders. They have betrayed the public trust and continue to show a perverse sense of entitlement, seeking to retain power and wealth at all costs. Reports suggest that President Salva Kiir and his loyalists are contemplating a new military offensive in the coming days against the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition. Moreover, there are clear indications that Riek Machar and other opposition groups are pursuing a military escalation.

It is time to put the people of South Sudan, and not its leaders, at the forefront of any strategy. The international community must come together to provide the necessary help and incentives. At the same time, we should be united and determined in following through with severe consequences for those who impede the path to peace and stability.

In that spirit, I reiterate my call for an arms embargo on South Sudan. Such an embargo would diminish the capacity of all sides to wage war. South Sudan faces no external threat. More weapons will only pose a greater threat to its own people. We have repeatedly seen the deliberate targeting of civilian communities perceived to support an opposing side. As efforts to revive the political process continue, the least we can do is to stop the flow of more weapons, which pose a direct threat to the safety and security of civilians and humanitarian workers. Instability in South Sudan is also a threat to the region. I call on all the neighbouring countries to support and cooperate on an arms embargo.

The most urgent need is to prevent the parties from launching any military operation at the beginning of the dry season. I urge the Security Council, regional leaders and the international community to make it clear to President Kiir and Riek Machar that the initiation of a military offensive will carry serious consequences.

The parties must reinvigorate an inclusive political process that is deemed credible by the people of South Sudan and the international community. Any attempt to rubber-stamp the legitimacy of those in power will not bring peace or stability. An inclusive and credible process requires all parties to the conflict to have a seat at the negotiating table with the ability to share and exercise power without fear of reprisals. A national dialogue could be a positive step if all stakeholders are able to participate in freedom and safety. Unfortunately, that environment does not currently exist in South Sudan.

I call on regional leaders to invest all possible efforts into resuscitating the political process in South Sudan. I commend the work of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union, and call upon the Security Council to complement those efforts. I strongly believe that an arms embargo is the most appropriate way to do so. Such a step, I should

emphasize, would strengthen and not undermine the political process.

The conflict in South Sudan has already assumed an ethnic dimension. We have witnessed hate speech from many internationaln leadership positions. As my Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, said to the Council after his recent visit to South Sudan (see S/PV.7814), genocide is not one event: it is a process. I am afraid that process is about to begin unless immediate action is taken. The Security Council must take steps to stem the flow of arms to South Sudan, as well as to send a clear warning that hate speech, incitement and violence must end and that there will be accountability for mass atrocities and other crimes.

As the Council is aware, after two independent investigations, I have had to take some difficult decisions regarding the performance of our troops in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Moreover, UNMISS continues to face serious restrictions on its freedom of movement throughout the country, in clear violation of the status-of-forces agreement. The Secretariat has been providing the Security Council with a list of those violations on a monthly basis. Unfortunately, those reports have not resulted in any action on the part of the Council to restore the freedom of movement without which the Mission will be unable to fully implement its mandate.

But an improvement of the Mission's performance is only one part of the picture. The Government of South Sudan should also fulfil its pledges of unconditional acceptance of the deployment of the Regional Protection Force. Words alone are insufficient. They must be matched by practical actions that demonstrate a strategic shift to full cooperation with the United Nations and all partners for peace.

I spoke with President Kenyatta of Kenya on Saturday to exchange views on the South Sudan peace process. I emphasized that the Regional Protection Force represented the collective commitment of the region to peace, security and stability. I would like to commend Kenya for its unwavering commitment to peace in South Sudan and for working closely with the United Nations to meet that goal.

The people of South Sudan have suffered for far too long and far too much. We must put all pressure on leaders who think or act otherwise. If we fail to act, South Sudan will be on a trajectory towards mass atrocities. Its people will be the targets of those atrocities while they pin their hopes on the international community in general and the Security Council. I appeal to the Security Council to act now in fulfilment of its responsibility and in support of ongoing regional efforts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. O'Brien.

Mr. O'Brien: I wish to add my condolences for the tragic loss of Ambassador Andrey Karlov today.

I fully align with the Secretary-General's request of the Council and of the Government of South Sudan.

I thank you, Mr. President, for this timely opportunity to brief the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan. In my briefing to the Council on 22 June, and in the written submission issued jointly with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in August, I highlighted the spread of violence to new areas and its humanitarian consequences. Six months later, the humanitarian situation has deteriorated dramatically. This will not come as any surprise to anyone in the Council, since they have heard and have been following the reports, as I have, month upon deteriorating month. Violence and attacks against civilians have continued. Hundreds of thousands of people have been driven from their homes and hunger has deepened. There are numerous accounts of horrific gender-based and sexual violence, with most perpetrators walking free.

Last week, the conflict in South Sudan entered its fourth year. Since December 2013, civilians have borne the brunt and faced increasingly appalling humanitarian conditions. We are now witnessing a scale of need for assistance and protection that demands our urgent, relentless attention and action. This year, some 6.1 million people — half the population of that young nation — required humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian community expects that number to rise by a staggering further 20 to 30 per cent in 2017, due to the destructive violence on the ground and forced displacement compounded by food insecurity, economic decline, destitution and a breakdown of basic services.

Approximately 3.1 million South Sudanese have been forced to flee their homes — 1.3 million of them across borders as refugees and more than 1.8 million internally. Many South Sudanese have been displaced multiple times, failing to find the safety and security

they so desperately need. Since July alone, more than 383,000 people have gone to Uganda while the others have moved to Ethiopia, the Sudan, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. People flee with almost nothing — just the clothes on their backs and whatever few belongings they are able to carry. Their journeys are mostly perilous, due to insecurity, leg-sapping marshland to slog slowly through, or desiccated, inescapable heat, and always with a lack of food, water and shelter. I have received more and more harrowing reports of families being separated with little to no provisions. The sick, disabled and elderly are simply, terrifyingly, being left behind to an inhumane and unknown or sadly at times a too well-known fate and of attacks, including killing, rape and the abduction of young men.

For children, as ever the future of that young country, the cost of protracted conflict continues to be particularly brutal. Children make up around half of all those who are displaced, and more than 9,000 children are registered as being unaccompanied, separated or missing. More than 17,000 children are believed to have been recruited by armed actors since the conflict began. Fewer than half of primary school-aged children are currently enrolled in schools. One in four schools is closed, primarily due to insecurity, and learning in general has been disrupted by the displacement of teachers and schoolchildren alike. There has been one lost generation and now another, and much capacity to rebuild South Sudan one day, somewhere ahead, has also been lost.

Hunger and malnutrition levels are disconcertingly high and encompass communities in places that were considered to be relatively food secure less than a year ago. More than 1 million children under the age of five are now estimated to be acutely malnourished. Recent screenings in Torit, Lafon and Ikotos in Eastern Equatoria have found proxy global acute malnutrition rates above the emergency threshold. At the height of the lean season in 2016, approximately 4.8 million people — more than one in every three people in South Sudan — were estimated to be severely food insecure. That number will increase in 2017 because of the ongoing conflict, economic decline and poor agricultural yields.

Basic services are severely stretched and in many areas only partially functioning, if at all. Fewer than half of the country's medical facilities are operational, and even when operational they have the capacity to provide only minimal services, given chronic lack of essential medicines. Since December 2013, 106 health facilities have closed, while at least 29 have been looted or destroyed. As a result, the sick or wounded, including survivors of rape, often have nowhere to go to get treatment.

Women and girls continue to face heightened risks of sexual violence, particularly by armed actors, with rape used as a weapon of war. In Wau in February and June, and in Juba in July, hundreds of women reported rapes and gang rapes. Other reports have come in from Bentiu, Leer, Malakal, Yambio and other locations across the Equatorias, including of abductions and rapes. Those reported attacks often occur at armed checkpoints. There have also been multiple reports of sexual violence perpetrated against women and girls who leave protection-of-civilians sites to gather firewood and food. With reference to the prevalence of gang rape, the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan said last week that it is "running out of words to describe the horror".

At the very moment when needs are growing and deepening, the ability of humanitarian partners to provide life-saving assistance timely and effectively is diminishing at an alarming pace. National and international organizations continue to work tirelessly to provide assistance in one of the most dangerous and challenging operating environments in the world today. I want to express my deep respect and admiration for their commitment and courage. But everyone needs to know that it comes at a high cost. So far, at least 67 humanitarian workers have paid with their lives — 12 of them since July. The humanitarian community is also being targeted in other ways. During the horrific attack on the Terrain Hotel in July, humanitarian workers were sexually assaulted, raped and murdered. Over the past months, reports of harassment have become numerous and routine.

Beyond the ongoing insecurity, aid organizations are now facing increasing levels of bureaucratic obstruction and intimidation, mainly by the Government of South Sudan, but also by parts of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition. In the past four weeks alone, there have been four serious incidents in which South Sudanese authorities have arrested, detained or deported senior staff of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). No formal charges have been presented in any of those cases. In another case, one of the largest South Sudanese NGOs had their office

in Juba shut down by authorities, again without documented cause. Despite démarches from the United Nations, there have been no explanations.

That is simply unacceptable, and those incidents must stop. To be clear — our NGO partners deliver around 70 per cent of all humanitarian assistance in South Sudan. Their presence and programming are fundamental to the continued life-saving response. Without national and international NGOs on the ground, food cannot be delivered to scale; emergency medical relief cannot be provided to all those who require it; malnutrition cannot be adequately treated; and life-saving access to clean water to prevent the spread of diseases such as cholera will be hampered.

Despite those immense challenges, humanitarians have delivered life-saving aid to approximately 4.7 million people this year, including nearly 3.6 million, who were reached with food assistance or emergency livelihoods support; more than 195,000 severely malnourished children, who were admitted for treatment; more than 2 million who were provided access to clean water; more than 1 million, who were reached with emergency shelter and vital non-food items; and nearly 200,000 children, who were administered with the pentavalent vaccine against five major diseases. More than 18,000 survival kits — an inter-agency lightweight package of supplies designed to be easily carried by people on the run — have been dispatched to some of the most remote locations. That assistance has been delivered based on assessed needs, targeting people in the most severe need in all areas of the country.

Against the backdrop of a humanitarian situation that is a relentless descent into this catastrophic abyss of hopelessness, fear, intimidation, irreversible damage, destruction, stunting and death, an increasing number of South Sudanese are looking to humanitarian actors for assistance. Yet access to those most in need continues to be restricted in some areas of the country. Last month, 100 reports of humanitarian access incidents were documented — the highest number in any month since June 2015. I am appalled to highlight that approximately 67 per cent of those incidents involved violence against humanitarian workers or assets.

Where towns are controlled by one party to the conflict and surrounded by another, we continue to face major challenges to reaching people in need owing to the active conflict and access denials, particularly in Yei, Central Equatoria, in which we estimate that tens of thousands of people who have been unable to make the long and costly journey to Uganda remain displaced in areas surrounding the town and unable to access assistance and in Wau, Western Bahr el Ghazal, in which tens of thousands of people outside the town have been largely cut off from aid for months. The recent proliferation of armed actors has increased the complexity of access negotiations and heightened risks to aid workers.

As I have stated before, including in Juba, Wau and Aweil, during my visit in August, steps and action must be taken once and for all to remove those obstacles, which are unacceptable and run contrary to the parties' obligations under international humanitarian law. It is critical that all humanitarian organizations are granted free, safe and unhindered access to all people in need wherever they are. While we welcome steps taken by the Government to address some of those challenges, including the establishment of the Humanitarian High Level Oversight Committee, it is vital that commitments be translated immediately into concrete and effective action.

South Sudan is on the brink. Decisive action to end the violence is needed, and it is incumbent upon the Council to make sure that the necessary action is taken. My message today is therefore three-fold.

First, if a political solution is not urgently found to stop the violence, the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan will not only grow but will cascade way beyond anyone's control, not least, that of the Council. There must be a cessation of violence. There is no alternative.

Secondly, collective leverage must be exerted to ensure the facilitation of unhindered access to all those who require assistance in all areas of the country. As part and parcel of that, there must be real commitment to protect humanitarian workers. Meanwhile, those who killed, attacked and raped humanitarian workers must be prosecuted and held to account just as the impunity of those who attack civilians must come to an end.

Finally, I draw the Council's attention, as did the Secretary-General just a moment ago so powerfully, to the recent call made by his Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide on the imminent risk of violence escalating along ethnic lines with the clear potential for genocide. There is no greater urgency than to prevent that from happening. Millions of women, men, girls and boys are already suffering. It is imperative that all do

what is in their power to stop the current trajectory and collectively help South Sudan and, above all, the South Sudanese people avert a cataclysmic infernal event and find a path to get back on a track to peace and security for all its citizens.

I was going to stop there, but allow me as the Council's humanitarian adviser to add one more point. I say this with the representative of South Sudan present here today. The international community and the Council itself have repeatedly said, "Never again" — after Srebrenica and Rwanda. Given the clear facts and evidence in South Sudan presented this evening, how many more clues do we all need to move from our anxious words to real, preventative action? How many lives, women, men and children can we all save if we and those with influence over the parties act decisively today?

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. O'Brien for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for showing his deep dedication to the people of South Sudan by being here today and injecting his passion and compassion for the people of a country that he has visited many times.

I want to begin my remarks by apologizing to the Secretary-General, because I do not know how long he has been asking for an arms embargo and targeted sanctions. It is not every day that he comes to the Security Council and is very specific about his prescriptions. Yet, in the case of South Sudan, he has asked, and we have not delivered. I think that is something upon which we need to reflect in light of the graphic nature of the briefings that we have heard and the first-hand eyewitness testimonies that we have read, by which we have been horrified. South Sudan used to be an issue on which the Council was pretty unified. We should try to retrieve that unity in light of the Secretary-General's warning, which will go down as one of his last warnings to this Council. If we fail to act, South Sudan will be on a trajectory towards mass atrocities. The Secretary-General has said it. We have to admit that, as a Security Council — each and every one of us.

I would just add an account of one family that has been affected by the conflict, the matriarch of which is 28 year-old, Irene, a mother from Yei River state. She and her children barely escaped death on two occasions. The first time, she was reportedly at home when armed men came to her door and called out her husband's name. Irene's husband had just managed to push her and the kids under their bed before the soldiers kicked down the door and shot him in the head. Irene fled for the Ugandan border but ran into another group of armed men. As she relayed to a journalist, two women were trapped and raped by the men. The men took two infants and used them as if they were sticks to beat the women. The children survived but they were damaged inside.

That account is so graphic and so terrible and yet, the number of accounts from the region that have that kind of gory, savage detail is too large to count. Babies used as clubs to beat their own mothers, rape, the execution of a woman's husband — that is what Irene witnessed before getting to Uganda and the relative safety of a refugee camp. That is just one story over the past week — just this week. For Council members who were saying that things are getting better, they should know that an average of 5,189 refugees like Irene stream into Uganda every day. That is this week. That is not back in July or back when the conflict started in 2013. The situation is not getting better, but worse.

Meanwhile, we are sitting on our hands as a Council. We have to try to stop atrocities in South Sudan, and the question is not whether we should do that, but rather how quickly we can do that. We have to adopt an arms embargo, targeted sanctions — the tools in the toolbox that we have. If people have better ideas, then we are open to better ideas, but more of the same is not working. Violence is tearing South Sudan apart, and the Government undermines virtually all international efforts to help. I say that much more in sorrow than in anger, given how closely the United States has worked with that Government and how closely the United States has wanted to work with that Government, even throughout this crisis.

Three million people have been displaced inside and outside South Sudan and more than half of the country faces food insecurity. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, has reported that violations of human rights are so widespread that they have become almost commonplace. As we have heard from all the visitors who go to various parts of South Sudan, violations includes the systematic use of sexual violence as a

weapon of war. What does that actually mean to the people in the country? In the town of Yei, blockaded civilians cannot venture out of the city into their fields, so the crops that would feed them rot away. That is what is happening right now. In the Equatorias, which in one stage of the conflict had not seen violence, the threat of violence is now so extreme that the only way to flee the city is by crawling through the bush, because soldiers and armed groups who rape and murder control the roads. In Unity state, one rape victim told the Commission on human rights in South Sudan, "there is no stigma around rape because for us it is normal. It is happening every day to us."

Those Council members who were on the trip to South Sudan heard those testimonies at first hand. That should not surprise us. Consider the Government's unfortunate response: continued obstruction of assistance and defiance of the demands of the Council. As we have heard, in recent weeks, the Government deported four highly experienced aid workers with no apparent justification, including the country directors for two very large non-governmental organizations.

We also have to talk about the opposition. The Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO) is making it even harder for humanitarian agencies to operate in the areas that they control. Non-governmental organizations now need to petition the SPLA-IO for accreditation, which requires a fee. Then they have to give at least 48 hours notice of any humanitarian flight before arrival. That is now common practice across the country. It makes it impossible to deliver food to people who need it. Again, for those who think that the situation is getting better or is static, I have bad news. The United Nations recorded more obstructions to humanitarian assistance last month than during any other month since June 2015. We see more obstructions to humanitarian assistance and yet, we sit here doing more of the same and expect a different result, which is the definition of insanity.

South Sudan is making it harder for people to get aid, even as the Council has done the right thing in demanding unfettered access. The Government is obstructing and defying. In August, we tried to mitigate the violence by authorizing the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Regional Protection Force (RPF). I express thanks to all Council members who supported the Force. Since then, the Government has talked a lot about allowing the RPF to deploy, and they have expressed some type of consent to the RPF in statements and letters at least six times — we only know about six times. How often have they consented? They consented on 4 September, 20 September, 15 October, 16 October, 16 November and 30 November. However, none of those letters of consent or words of consent has translated into consent on the ground and deployment, which is the measure of whether our will as a Council is being respected. Again, we are witnessing obstruction and defiance.

The South Sudan Government has also offered assurance that UNMISS can patrol without interference. That is part of what the Council has rightly asked for. However, in reality, we know that is not happening. In recent weeks, South Sudan's authorities have again imposed restrictions on UNMISS patrols around the Equatorias, as well as in areas outside Wau and in the region of Bahr el Ghazal — two places where we know that people are in need of protection. Yet, we see more obstruction and more defiance of the Council's resolutions.

The problem right now for us in taking this wait-and-see posture is that South Sudan, as the Secretary-General put it in his extraordinary briefing, may be running out of time. Even if we could deploy the entire RPF tomorrow and even if UNMISS faced no obstruction of any kind, those peacekeepers would face immense challenges in stopping the escalating, ethnically based violence that we are witnessing on the ground. The Council needs to do much more to respond to the growing risk of mass atrocities. The warnings are everywhere. We have all heard them. The Commission on human rights in South Sudan has said that South Sudan is on the brink of an all-out ethnic civil war. The Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for the Prevention of Genocide, Ms. Adama Dieng, who is sitting right here with the rest of us, has warned of a "strong risk of violence escalating along ethnic lines with the potential for genocide".

Nobody here can say that things have gotten better since Adama Dieng briefed us. We have just heard from the Secretary-General and Mr. Stephen O'Brien that things have gotten worse. The people within the United Nations system whose job it is to sound the alarm have sounded it. History is going to show what each of us did and where each of us stood when the sirens were blaring and when the red lights were flashing in South Sudan. Now is when each of us has to be counted. Where were we when the lights flashed red for the people of South Sudan?

In some parts of South Sudan, ethnic killings are already underway. Every day, we hear vows to take revenge on the airwaves, as the number of killings increases and as the cycle of violence escalates. In Central Equatoria, at least 1,900 structures — houses, businesses, schools — have been destroyed since the fighting began two months ago. The Government has mobilized at least 4,000 militia from other areas and staged them in Equatoria. We know that large-scale attacks could start at any moment.

Let me wrap up with a closing argument on this incredibly important issue. Some on this Council argue that it is not the right time to impose an arms embargo and targeted sanctions. Some point to the public statements and nice words from Government officials that say that we need to give the Government yet another chance. Another chance? We have seen citizens in South Sudan go hungry as money gets invested in large weapons systems. We have seen the deployment of peacekeepers stalled. It is late December. We were there in early September. Not one soldier of the RPF has been deployed — not one soldier.

Of course, we join others in hoping that our dear friends in South Sudan, with whom we have worked so closely and for whom we worked to secure their independence, will follow through on their recent promises, just as we had hoped that they would follow through on previous promises. However, to use those promises as an excuse to delay action, when we hear from the Secretary-General so powerfully about what is happening on the ground, when he has been banging his head against this table for so long, for more than a year, asking for such measures to try to mitigate the violence, we have no more alibis.

Some Council members have been pretty direct about expressing concerns about the risks that imposing those measures would pose to their peacekeepers or to their workers who are on the ground in South Sudan. Every Government has a responsibility to look out for their citizens, and I very much appreciate that concern, as we also, of course, have many aid workers and embassy personnel who are there in South Sudan.

But can we really believe — those of us who care about our people — can we really believe that more arms coming into the country is the way to look out for their safety? Can we really believe that allowing the Government of South Sudan to continue to invest its money in such weapons systems, instead of in the food that people need to eat, is the best way to look out for our people? The people that we are hoping to designate are people whose public statements no one disputes — they are on the record, advertising their statements aimed at ethnicizing the conflict and spoiling whatever hope there is to get back to a peace agreement. Those individuals feel a sense of impunity. If the Council is unprepared to act on such designations, can that sense of impunity be good for our people on the ground, our workers, our peacekeepers and our aid workers? It can not be. How is impunity good? How are more arms good for the safety of our people?

However, well beyond that, what about the South Sudanese people? Do they get a vote? How would they vote on such measures? We heard them when we met with a wide range of civil society and other actors. We know how they would vote, and we need to keep their votes in mind. We need to bring this draft resolution at last to a vote, which we will do by the end of this year. Members of the Council will need to raise their hands and make a decision on where they stand on the issues of life and death that have been raised by the Secretary-General and by everyone who goes to South Sudan and comes back. Above all, the people of South Sudan have a stake in our action. Council members — each of us — will need to own our decisions, so the United States urges members to prepare to vote your conscience and to vote to stand with the people of South Sudan.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to thank Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Stephen O'Brien, for their briefings.

Uruguay expresses its deep concern about the current situation affecting South Sudan. The worsening violence, in particular since July, has had devastating consequences for civilians. There have been widespread violations of human rights law and humanitarian law, including extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, rapes and other acts of sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and imprisonment, attacks against civilians and attacks against medical facilities, humanitarian assistance workers, medical personnel and media workers. Some human rights violations are increasingly taking on an ethnic nature, and hate speech is increasing throughout the whole country, which is extremely alarming, given the fact that it could lead to large-scale atrocities. Furthermore, the humanitarian crisis in the country is increasing in scope and intensity as a result of the armed

conflict in several parts of the country, the exacerbation of the food-security situation and the worsening of the economic situation.

The United Nations figures are disturbing: more than 1 million refugees, more than 1.6 million internally displaced persons and almost 5 million people who are in a state of acute food insecurity. After the Security Council mission to the country last September, we returned very aware of what has happened there. Uruguay calls upon all the parties involved in the conflict and on the entire international community to bring an end to the suffering of civilians in South Sudan. The situation is unsustainable.

In that connection, we must continuously remind the Government that its main responsibility is that of protecting its own citizens and that it should provide that protection regardless of their ethnic origin or political affiliation. Also, the political leaders of South Sudan must behave responsibly and reject any incitement to violence, while opting for the path of dialogue. In the final analysis, they must honour their leadership.

On this point, we take note of the statement delivered by the President of South Sudan, Mr. Salva Kiir, on 14 December, when he announced the beginning of a national dialogue process. We hope that that process will truly be inclusive in nature. We urge all the parties to join in a dialogue process, with a view to achieving reconciliation and peace in the country, just as happened five years ago, when South Sudan became an independent country. Today we must seek unity and pluralism, which is the only way to put the country on the path towards stability and development.

Lastly, I would like to mention the work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), whose mandate was renewed unanimously a few days ago by the Council. It is crucial for UNMISS to be able to fulfil its mandate fully. We therefore urge the Government of South Sudan to fully cooperate with the implementation of resolution 2327 (2016), including the deployment of the Regional Protection Force, as well as lifting any restriction on the Mission. Neither UNMISS nor the Regional Protection Force are against the Sudan. To the contrary, they are for South Sudan.

In conclusion, I would like to wish every success to the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMISS, Mr. David Shearer, and assure him of my delegation's support and cooperation.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to start by conveying our gratitude to the Secretary-General and Mr. Stephen O'Brien, as well as to all our colleagues, who during the previous meeting took the floor and extended kind words of condolence to us following the killing of Ambassador Karlov in Ankara. Their words of condolence and support are extremely important for us.

I now to turn to South Sudan. We note the progress in implementing the South Sudanese peace agreement of last year. The Transitional Government of National Unity and the Parliament are working effectively with representatives of the armed opposition. Practical steps are being taken to strengthen mechanisms aimed at providing security and to draft a new constitution. President Salva Kiir launched an inclusive national dialogue. Amnesty has been declared for the partisans of Riek Machar who participated in the July events in Juba.

We are concerned by reports of armed clashes in various parts of the country. However, one has to understand clearly what their exact nature is. We share the view of the United Nations and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) that, to a large extent, those incidents have been the result of problems in the command structures and a lack of discipline in units of the Government's armed forces and those of the opposition. Another factor is the split in the opposition forces of the partisans of Taban Deng Gai and Riek Machar. There are also groups that are under no one's control. On top of all that there have been spontaneous clashes that are the result of interethnic tensions or even simply criminal actions.

Against that backdrop, we have doubts with regard to the widely circulating rumours that the Government is amassing its forces and mobilizing local armed elements in the Equatoria region for a large-scale offensive that is about to start after the end of the rainy season.

I would like to take the opportunity of the presence of representatives of the Secretariat to ask whether they can comment on the fact that the Juba Government has said that what is involved are normal rotations of the armed forces? We would also call upon our colleagues from the Council and the Secretariat to refrain from speculation about the threat of genocide in South Sudan. Naturally, we are concerned by the proliferation of venomous rhetoric in South Sudan, as well as actions

against various ethnic groups; however, those actions are not targeted against any particular community, rather there has been an increase in ethnic tensions in general.

We also note that those manifestations and actions have emanated, as a rule, from various types of armed and criminal groups and undisciplined elements of the security apparatus. This is why we would refrain from concluding that there is any form of targeted or systemic policy.

Among the positive events of late, we have Juba's unconditional agreement to and acceptance of the Regional Protection Force. That step was welcomed by the Secretary-General, as well as by the IGAD summit in Addis Ababa. Practical issues regarding the deployment of the Force are being discussed by representatives of the Government and the United Nations in a constructive manner, which was demonstrated, inter alia, by Juba's consent to the request of the United Nations for the provision of plots of land for the use of the Force.

However, even the deployment of a full-fledged 4,000-strong Regional Force is unlikely to significantly improve the difficult political, military and humanitarian situation in the country. We agree with the view of the Secretary-General and IGAD that that would require the full implementation of the peace agreement by the parties, with international partners' support.

Our position regarding new sanctions against South Sudan is well known and is shared by many members of the Council. In the IGAD summit communiqué dated 9 December it was clearly stated that new targeted sanctions or an arms embargo would not serve to establish lasting peace and stability in South Sudan. Furthermore, the African Union's Peace and Security Council's summit communiqué dated 19 September includes no calls for new sanctions.

Put succinctly, the sponsors of the draft resolution on sanctions are essentially ignoring Africa's position regarding the counterproductive nature of new restrictions on the process aimed at trying to reach a settlement. Those colleagues are clearly demonstrating in their statements that they only accept those African documents that are in line with their interests and approaches.

The sponsors of the draft resolution on sanctions are ignoring the fact that differences among African States will probably undermine the effectiveness of any such restrictions. We see that in the example of a number of African States, including the Central African Republic, where targeted sanctions and the arms embargo are simply not working. South Sudan is awash with arms. That is evident from the fact that the group of a few hundred supporters of Riek Machar who fled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo had very few weapons with them, so quite obviously they dumped or hid them somewhere in South Sudanese territory.

The former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ellen Løj, also confirmed the presence of weapons in camps for the protection of civilians as well as in arms caches in the immediate vicinity. That, by the way, might have been what motivated the decision by the authorities to shut down the displaced-persons camp in Juba.

Generally speaking, in order to establish lasting peace in South Sudan, we do not need a Security Council arms embargo but rather targeted measures aimed at disarming the population as well as at demobilizing and reintegrating combatants. Targeted sanctions against the Minister of Information and the Chief of General Staff of the Government Army may have unpredictable consequences. We suspect that someone really wants to get rid of President Salva Kiir by ensuring that he gets into a fight with various influential figures in his immediate surroundings.

Instead of helping to resolve the conflict, a number of Security Council members are attempting to increase pressure on Juba, including through targeted sanctions and the hybrid court. Such short-sighted tactics will not help the situation.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to start by saying that France also aligns itself with the words of condolence conveyed to the Russian Federation in the light of the criminal attack that struck its Ambassador in Turkey.

I had not intended to take the floor here today in the Chamber, as I really only wanted to speak in the consultations, but it is not every day that the Secretary-General sends us such a powerful public message. The Secretary-General, as well as, of course, the Under-Secretary-General, delivered strong messages warning us that we have to assume our collective responsibility. It is a call for action.

For us, the serious nature of the situation in South Sudan requires collective mobilization not only by the Security Council but also by the whole of the United

Nations system and by the region itself, starting with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) along with the African Union. First and foremost, however, resolute action by the Government of South Sudan is essential. For us, collectively speaking, there are five or six axes on which we need to act rapidly.

The first — stated quite clearly by the Secretary-General — is the arms embargo. We regret the fact that for almost a year we have been discussing the embargo; the Secretary-General has advocated for it, and we have called for it. We regret that the arms embargo has not yet been imposed. Let me make it clear that for us the arms embargo is not a punitive measure or a lever to obtain some sort of political advantage. It is a measure of common sense that is intended to help a country ravaged by war and awash in weapons. The flow of weapons needs to be halted, and an end needs to be put to the arms trade circulating in that war-torn country. It is necessary, therefore, that the arms embargo be put in place as soon as possible.

The second element is a political process. We know, of course, the roles that the region, the subregion, IGAD and the African Union have played in undertaking rather encouraging developments in terms of national dialogue. What we would like to see are those encouraging developments actually being converted into actions. What is certain in any case is that, in the face of the obstacles created by some parties and the hate speech, which might hinder or undermine the peace process, the Security Council will have a role to play. We do have an instrument — targeted sanctions — that will enable us to intervene in support of a peace process, which we all desire.

The third element is the central question of the protection of civilians. That is, after all, at the very heart of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We decided last August to deploy the Regional Protection Force to bolster UNMISS capabilities. Since then, the Transitional Government of South Sudan has given its formal consent to that deployment, but unfortunately things have not moved forward, and now it is high time for plots of land to be provided so that we are able to deploy the Force. That is, of course, a test of the good faith and will of South Sudan, namely, to enable the deployment of the Force, and it is very important that Juba demonstrate that.

The fourth element is linked to my previous point. The implementation of the UNMISS mandate will require the unfettered ability to move and act. All obstacles that might hinder the deployment of the Force must be lifted. That is a core element of the message sent by Security Council members during their visit to South Sudan in September. Obstacles to the status of forces agreement must be lifted, and targeted sanctions by the Security Council will ensure that that takes place. In the case of confirmed obstacles, we could use sanctions to ensure that the peacekeeping operation that we have deployed is able to operate fully.

The fifth point I wanted to make is related to humanitarian issues. After I heard the point made by the Under-Secretary-General regarding the difficulties and obstacles that we face and the unacceptable price being paid by humanitarian workers, it is quite clear that it is absolutely essential to ensure that full access and cooperation be granted to the whole of the humanitarian community, at a time when the situation is quite disastrous.

My last point concerns the question of accountability and impunity. The transitional agreement adopted earlier this year provided for a hybrid court, the establishment of which is absolutely essential. South Sudan requires a judicial mechanism commensurate with the grave crimes being committed. The African Union will have an important role to play. It will enjoy the support of the Security Council in that regard, but there must be progress towards the establishment of the hybrid court.

All of these messages are contained in resolution 2327 (2016), adopted a few days ago, but the Security Council will have to make them more concrete and operational, first by voting in favour of the draft resolution on an arms embargo, and secondly by remaining mobilized and prepared to use leverage, starting with targeted sanctions, to curb a spiral of violence that could well lead to the disastrous situation described by Mr. Adama Dieng a few days ago.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malok (South Sudan): First, let me express my deepest condolences to the delegation of the Russian Federation for its loss.

I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for this month. I would also like to acknowledge the successful tenure of your predecessor and the positive role he played in leading the Council last month.

Let me also thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their kind briefings.

The Government of South Sudan has demonstrated political will by expressing its commitment to fully implementing the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. There is not much more to be said other than to reiterate some important points.

Recently the Government of South Sudan agreed and accepted the deployment of Regional Protection Force (RPF) without conditions. If there is any failure or delay in the deployment of the Regional Protection Force, it is not on the part of South Sudan. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has not informed us of any failure on the part of the Government of South Sudan. We have allocated land for the RPF, concerning which we have communited officially to the Security Council through the monthly presidency.

The Government has also formed a committee that will look into the obstruction and the complaints lodged by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) about any possible roadblock. From the time the committee was established, there has been no further report presented for us to look into.

Recently, the President of South Sudan, His Excellency Mr. Salva Kiir Mayardit, announced a national dialogue that will include all the stakeholders in the country. The dialogue is the only viable means of solving the political and socioeconomic problems in South Sudan. Unfortunately, it was rejected by Riek Machar.

We disagree with the characterization by Mr. Adama Dieng, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for the Prevention of Genocide, of the ongoing conflict in South Sudan, which according to him could become an outright ethnic war, perhaps verging on genocide. Such description is a bit exaggerated and does not reflect the reality on the ground. There have been no attempts that we are aware of on the part of the South Sudanese masses to turn against each other. Recently, the rebels have resorted to killing innocent civilians because of their ethnic background, but the Government has not planned or launched a campaign to target specific ethnicities or communities and has no intention whatsoever to engage in anything of that nature.

We recognize the importance accorded to the protection of civilians and the safeguarding of the delivery of humanitarian assistance, but it is our sincere hope that UNMISS will also pay due attention to capacity-building of Government institutions, which have crucial roles to play during the transitional period. It should assist the activities of the South Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, the National Constitutional Amendment Committee and the National Elections Commission, and provide technical expertise on security sector reform. In other words, UNMISS should attach importance to supporting the implementation of the agreement.

Some members have spoken of a lack of progress, but I can report that there has been tremendous progress made in the implementation of the peace process in South Sudan. Council members did not mention that people have been voluntarily leaving the protection of civilians camps for their respective home regions. Over the past two days, over 2,000 citizens have left the protection of civilians camp in Juba to return to Unity state, and the Government is assisting them by providing transportation. If there had been progress, they would not have risked their lives to go back to their homes.

The proposed arms embargo and threats of sanctions on all the parties engaged in the conflict in South Sudan are unfortunately another indication of a moral equivalency that does not distinguish between a legitimately elected Government and an armed rebellion intent on overthrowing the Government. To deny the Government the necessary means to discharge its responsibility is to fundamentally undermine its sovereignty, which is totally unacceptable. The imposition of sanctions would be counter-productive.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate my Government's commitment to implementing the agreement in letter and spirit, and emphasize the need to encourage and support political dialogue and the efforts of the Government of National Unity to fully implement the peace agreement. The road to final peace may be long and difficult, but with the support of our partners we are optimistic that we will shall see the light at the end of the tunnel.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7847

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7847th meeting

Tuesday, 20 December 2016, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Rajoy Brey/González de Linares Palou	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Martins
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Ukraine	Mr. Kyslytsya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Stewart
	United States of America	Ms. Mendelson
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Trafficking in persons in conflict situations

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of measures to counter trafficking in persons (S/2016/949)

Letter dated 2 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/1031)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Terrorist acts

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Sadly, we must once again open a meeting by reiterating our firmest condemnation of the cruel terrorist attacks that have occurred in recent days, adding to the painfully long list of such attacks. On Sunday, terrorist attacks were carried out in Aden and Karak, Jordan, followed yesterday by attacks in Berlin and Ankara, the latter against His Excellency Mr. Andrey Karlov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Turkey. I offer our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and wish the injured a speedy recovery.

In demonstration of the pain we share with all the victims of terrorism and our firm rejection of these cowardly terrorist attacks, I would now ask Council members to rise and observe a minute of silence.

The members of the Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Trafficking in persons in conflict situations

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of measures to counter trafficking in persons (S/2016/949)

Letter dated 2 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/1031)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, Ministers and other distinguished representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey and Uganda to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan, civilian activist for Yazidi women's rights; Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking and recent Vaclav Havel Prize and Sakharov Prize winner; Mr. Ashraf Nour, Director of the International Organization for Migration Office to the United Nations; His Excellency Mr. Gonzalo Koncke, Permanent Observer of the Organization of American States to the United Nations; and Mr. Emmanuel Roux, Special Representative, Office of the International Criminal Police Organization.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Myria Vassiliadou, Anti-Trafficking Coordinator of the European Union, to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations to participate in this meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/949, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of measures to counter trafficking in persons. I wish to also draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/1031, which contains a letter dated 2 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to whom I now give the floor.

The Secretary-General: I thank the Spanish presidency of the Council, led by His Excellency Mr. Rajoy Brey, for convening this important meeting. I come with a plea for Member States to take steps to help victims of trafficking today and prevent further cases in the future. That means attention to immediate crimes and underlying causes.

Trafficking is a global problem, but the most vulnerable people are those caught in conflict: women, children, internally displaced persons and refugees. War provides oxygen to terrorist groups. It gives them space to flourish. the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and others are using trafficking and sexual violence as weapons of terror and an important source of revenue. Both ISIL and Boko Haram have engaged in the sexual enslavement of women and girls through trafficking. Yazidi girls captured in Iraq are trafficked into Syria and sold in open slave markets as if they were things, not people.

Before the conflict in Syria began, there were few, if any, human trafficking victims from that country. Now, victims from Syria — along with Iraq, Somalia and other conflict-torn countries — are found in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Traumatized Syrian refugee children are being forced to work. Instead of studying and playing, they are sewing clothes, serving food and selling items on the street. We have to fight trafficking for the sake of the victims When we do, we will also decrease funding for terrorists and make everyone safer. We need action on two fronts.

The first is justice and accountability. These are heinous crimes that demand immediate international action. International law needs to be respected and implemented. The United Nations is actively engaged in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers. States must also train peacekeepers and others to respond to trafficking in persons and prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. We should intensify training on preventing trafficking in persons as well as sexual exploitation and abuse.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime is a vital tool. I call on all States that are not party to its Protocol on trafficking in persons to join right away. I also urge countries to adopt dedicated anti-trafficking laws and national action plans. States should consider creating multidisciplinary law-enforcement units or specialized prosecutors' offices to address this threat.

Some States have successfully suppressed trafficking syndicates by targeting money-laundering and criminal proceeds. We should step up this action. Governments have to respond, especially when their own nationals are involved.

I call on all States to investigate and prosecute such cases, including those in which their own nationals commit this crime abroad. All perpetrators must be brought to justice.

The problem of trafficking is international in nature, and only an international response can succeed. The United Nations is bringing together Governments, other organizations and civil-society groups. I call for increased support to United Nations entities that are confronting the problem of trafficking.

I encourage contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. These initiatives are helping victims to heal and become agents of change.

The second front is human rights and stability. If conflict gives oxygen to traffickers, human rights and stability suffocate them. That is why it is so important to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda promises a life of dignity for all people and focuses on helping the farthest behind first. To fulfil this promise, we have to stand for the human rights of all victims and vulnerable people.

I call for all countries to ratify all international human rights, refugee, labour rights and crime-prevention conventions, and to put efforts into their effective implementation.

The majority of trafficking victims are women and girls. Our response must include special attention to their rights. States must adopt gender-sensitive and rights-based migration policies. We need strategic leadership in ending war and also in preventing conflicts and sustaining peace. That is why I have strengthened the commitment of the United Nations to supporting Member States in early action and in preventive diplomacy.

As this may be my last speech to the Council, let me emphasize once again that prevention should be at the forefront. I welcome my successor's focus on this very important priority. Let us work together to help today's victims of trafficking while creating a more stable and just world for all.

I thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership and commitment.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now call on Mr. Fedotov.

Mr. Fedotov: Several tragedies took place yesterday: the cowardly assassination of the Russian Ambassador to Turkey and the despicable terrorist attack in Berlin. May I express, on behalf of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), my deepest condolences to the Governments of the Russian Federation and Germany and to the families of the victims. As the UNODC mandate includes counter-terrorism, we stand ready to increase our support to Member States to strengthen international solidarity and cooperation in fighting the scourge of terrorism and hatred.

Turning to the agenda item under consideration, allow me to begin by expressing my gratitude to the Security Council for its attention to this urgent issue. Indeed, this is a historic meeting of the Security Council, as the Council is set to adopt, for the first time in its history, an action-oriented resolution dedicated to human trafficking. I would also like to thank UNODC Goodwill Ambassador Nadia Murad for helping to raise awareness of the plight of trafficking victims.

Thanks to these efforts, heightened attention is being given to the problem of human trafficking in conflict and mass movements of refugees and migrants, where we have seen this terrible crime acquire ever more appalling dimensions.

In seeking to strengthen international responses, we must keep in sharp focus the fact that human trafficking is pervasive. It is transnational, and its victims are everywhere. Trafficking victims have been detected in 106 countries and territories around the world.

Building effective action thus requires a strong framework of international cooperation and shared responsibility. I deliberately use the word "build", as there is no single measure, no one step in any given part of the world that can address this problem alone.

The building blocks we need can be found in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. This international treaty, concluded more than a decade ago, is still young, but some 158 countries have now criminalized most forms of human trafficking in their domestic laws, in line with the Protocol. It is true that the full implementation of the Protocol's provisions has yet to be achieved. However, the Palermo Convention and the Protocol could serve as a platform for a vast collective response to many of the challenges raised by today's debate.

What we really need is to strengthen existing frameworks, which represent a solid foundation of international law and years of painstaking operational cooperation that we can build upon to act against modern-day slave traders, including in situations of conflict and wherever we find such activities taking place.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/949) details the efforts of the United Nations system to support Member States in improving the implementation of this international law instrument.

Tomorrow UNODC will present its 2016 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, which it is mandated to do by the General Assembly and which provides a snapshot of the state of national responses to the challenges of human trafficking. The report, based on reliable data and information provided by Member States, establishes that an increasing number of trafficking victims from conflict-affected countries such as Syria, Iraq and Somalia have been detected in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. The report also features a thematic chapter on the connections between conflict, migration and trafficking. I hope that all present will join us tomorrow at the launch.

Looking ahead, I would like to highlight the urgent need for countries to improve identification and referral processes tailored to the challenges of conflict zones and mass movements.

UNODC is helping countries to enhance the identification and protection of trafficking victims among refugees and displaced persons fleeing conflict in the Middle East and Africa, and we hope to expand

this work in future. At the same time, strategic law-enforcement action must target upstream organized criminals through intelligence-sharing, joint operations, financial investigations and coordination within and across borders.

The full arsenal of tools that we have to disrupt organized crime networks and terrorist groups and to fight money laundering and counter-terrorism financing must be deployed. Criminals exploit weakness. Gaps in our responses abet impunity and leave defenceless people exposed. UNODC is committed to doing our part to support the Security Council, to integrate action against human trafficking, to promote justice and accountability, and to protect the victimized and vulnerable.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Fedotov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Bangura.

Ms. Bangura: I join my colleagues in extending my sympathy to the Russian Federation for the assassination of the Russian Ambassador in Turkey.

I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to add my voice to this critical and timely debate on human trafficking in situations of conflict. I would like to start by extending my thanks and congratulations to Spain for convening this meeting today, and for its leadership every day as a tireless champion of the women, peace and security agenda during its tenure on the Council and beyond.

Over the past four years, during which I have served as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, we have witnessed a deep and enduring shift in the treatment of this issue as a peace and security imperative. This unprecedented political momentum has translated into the adoption of zero-tolerance policies for national armed and security forces; frameworks of cooperation and joint communiqués signed by Governments, signalling their commitment to act at the highest level — most recently, by the Government of Iraq; and landmark convictions for sexual violence as a war crime and a crime against humanity, including at the level of command responsibility.

Yet, as we take stock of this progress, we are also forced to confront new and previously unforeseen threats. These include the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism by groups that traffic their victims internally and across borders in the pursuit of profit. In the Chamber, we often hear accounts of survivors of wartime atrocity. The stories of those brave enough to bear witness — including the statements of the trafficking survivors here today — are vital to our work. But allow me to also take this opportunity to cast a searchlight on the perpetrators — on those whose deeds are often hidden by the so- called fog of war.

One such individual is Emir Abu Malek. He is responsible for trafficking women and girls from Iraq to Syria, dividing them up among his friends as the spoils of war. According to information obtained by my Office, this man issued instructions about where they should be transferred, to whom they should be given, and what his brothers in arms should do to these girls. On one occasion, he ordered that a group of 15 girls, aged 9- and 10-years old, be transferred to Raqqa and Mosul to be raped for half a day, and then sold on further.

Another individual is Emir Abu Ali. He implemented the so-called fatwa issued by Da'esh in April 2015, ordering the separation of children from their mothers. The aim was to enable children to be indoctrinated in the Madrassa Jihadia and their mothers to be sold into sexual slavery.

There is also the Sheikh in Raqqa who wrote his name on the palm of a Yazidi girl during the purchasing process to brand her as his property. There is the militant in Mosul responsible for buying and selling girls along with guns and rocket-propelled grenades. There is the head of a police station in Raqqa who used his position to facilitate human trafficking. And there are women like Umm Sayyaf, who helped to enforce sexual slavery, and Doctor Nawal, who carried out virginity tests and forced abortions at the behest of Da'esh, even injecting young girls with hormones to accelerate their maturation and readiness for sale into sexual slavery.

There are many more like them — too many to name — operating with absolute impunity. These ongoing atrocities are motivated as much by commercial as by ideological concerns. They are not isolated incidents. Simply stated, women and children have become part of the currency by which Da'esh consolidates its power. This blood money is then used to bankroll its actions and cement its authority.

Though it is largely invisible and difficult to quantify, the blood money of women and children has become part of the lifeblood that sustains that group. It

is part of the financial calculus made by Da'esh fighters that they will be able to supplement their salaries of a few hundred dollars a month with potentially tens of thousands of dollars raised through the sale and traffic of women and children. Unlike oil and antiquities, to which only top commanders have access, all militants are able to exploit local women and children to boost their personal economies.

In fact, a range of extremist groups are using sexual violence to advance their military, political, economic and ideological aims My Office has begun to monitor this trend through the reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, which we compile each year. These reports include an annexed list of parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of sexual violence in situations on the Council's agenda. Of the 48 parties listed, 37 are non-State actors. Seven are designated as terrorist groups. These include Da'esh, Ansar Eddine, the Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Al-Shabaab, the Al-Nusra Front, the Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest, and Boko Haram. Such groups invariably restrict women's rights, autonomy and freedoms through their reign of terror. Indeed, the same litany of horrors echoes across the accounts of Nigerian girls who have fled the grip of Boko Haram, Somali women liberated from Al-Shabaab, and women in northern Mali who languish in the shadow of Ansar Eddine

The use of sexual violence as a tactic to strike fear into the heart of the civilian population is not a new phenomenon; neither are the commodification, trafficking and exploitation of women and girls. But the combination of the evils that we are witnessing today seems unprecedented in its scope and brazen brutality. Crimes of sexual violence have historically been dismissed as random, opportunistic acts. They have been part of the larger silence surrounding women's experience of war, linked to gender-based discrimination and exclusion from security institutions. It is therefore unsurprising that the crime of terrorism has never been viewed through the eyes of its female victims.

Recognizing sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism demands that we rethink our response. For instance, we cannot deplore the public face of terrorism — the bombing, killing and property destruction — while ignoring the violence terrorists inflict on women and girls in private, behind closed doors. Our efforts to disrupt terrorist financing cannot be limited to oil smuggling and trafficking in antiquities, while ignoring people smuggling and the trafficking of human beings. As extremist groups evolve, their sources of financing become increasingly sophisticated and diversified. The result is a growing convergence between terrorism, trafficking and transnational organized crime.

To meet these evolving threats, our policies must also evolve. In this regard, applying a women, peace and security perspective, or a gender lens, can be truly transformative. Seen through this lens, sexual violence represents the very front line in our battle against violent extremism, because it is a battle being waged on and over the bodies of women and girls. To disrupt human trafficking is to help disrupt the business of terrorism. This is critical, because when stripped of the veneer of politics and the mystique of religion, we see that the business of terrorism is business. It is profitable crime under the cover of war. Although there is no internationally agreed definition of terrorism, current dynamics and realities on the ground have prompted many to ask: "When is sexual violence a tactic of terrorism?" To foster conceptual clarity, my Office has identified six key dimensions.

The first is when it is committed by violent extremists and terrorist groups in a systematic manner that is integral to the operation.

The second is when it is deliberately used to spread terror inculcate fear and create an atmosphere of insecurity in order to intimidate and suppress opposition, including as a form of collective punishment.

The third is when it is used to finance and sustain the activities of terrorist groups or as part of the systems of punishment and rewards through which they control behaviour, and includes the gifting of women and girls as a form of in-kind compensation for fighters and the leveraging of the threat of sexual violence to extort ransoms from the families of those abducted.

The fourth is when it is used to target political, ethnic or religious groups as a form of prosecution. Attacking women as symbolic bearers of cultural identity to shred the social fabric and unravel kinship ties. That tactic may be linked with forced displacement and population flight.

The fifth is when it advances a strategy to radicalize, recruit, retain or reward fighters — often disseminated by a technology and communication platform, as part of online propaganda. That includes

the promise of access to wives and sex slaves and the trading of women between brothers in exclusive online forums that cement group ties and affiliation.

Finally, sexual violence is a tactic of terrorism when it is committed pursuant to an ideology of controlling women's bodies, sexuality and reproduction to produce a generation that can be raised and groomed in the image of the organization, according to their ideology. Da'esh has established an official sex-trafficking institution, dubbed Married Bureaus, to match young women to fighters for that purpose.

Those six indicators of sexual violence as a tactic of terror will continue to be tracked and monitored by my mandate. Victims of sexual violence by terrorist groups are victims of terrorism, in the same way that victims of sexual violence by warring parties are victims of war. Resolution 2331 (2016), adopted today, is an important normative development in that regard. The next step is to reflect that understanding in national counter-terrorism legislation to render sexual violence survivors eligible for relief and reparation programmes, on a basis of equality with other victims. That must be mirrored in national, regional and global counter-terrorism strategies, which can no longer be decoupled from efforts to protect and empower women and girls.

Greater coherence is needed between national action plans on women, peace and security and plans being developed to counter violent extremism. Indeed, we have seen time and time again that if we ignore the voices of grass-roots women, we do so at our peril. Too often, women have identified the early signs of radicalization but their warnings have gone unheard and unheeded, due to a limited understanding of terrorism and to narrow counter-terrorism strategies which have traditionally been gender blind. Moving forward, we must deepen the evidence base that informs our advocacy and action. We must enhance information sharing and judicial cooperation to combat crimes that know no borders. It is a travesty and an outrage that not one Da'esh fighter has yet been convicted for crimes of sexual violence or even listed by our sanctions regime on that basis. We must mobilize the moral authority of progressive religious and community leaders who can help to shift the blame, shame and stigma of sexual violence from the victims to the perpetrators.

Socioeconomic reintegration support for survivors, including medical, psychosocial, legal and livelihood assistance must infuse all of our peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. As evidenced by their own families and communities, too many survivors are seen as affiliates of extremist groups rather than as victims. They are sometimes used as intelligence assets by security forces. As we bring back our girls, let us bring them back to an environment of support and opportunity, not hostility and suspicion.

This is not just a fight against terrorism or a fight against trafficking; it is ultimately a fight for the values and ideas that shape our common future. Da'esh and their affiliates may view abducted women as commodities to be trafficked. They may itemize them as price lists, ranging from $20 to $20,000, haggling online over their victim's perceived market value. They may try to negotiate the waters for human life or barter away a captured child for as little as a pack of cigarettes, but I am confident that the Council and its sanctions committees will meet those depraved acts of terror with unity and clarity of purpose. Together, we will send a resounding signal that the rights, freedoms and futures of women and children are non-negotiable.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Bangura for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Hasan.

Ms. Hasan (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend my most heartfelt thanks to the Spanish delegation for having invited me today to talk about an important subject that is ravaging the members of my community.

I will open with a phrase that I heard on several occasions after the black day of the attack on the Yazidi region of Sinjar on 3 August 2014. It is a phrase told to me over the phone by a Yazidi in the hands of Da'esh: "I beg you to tell the authorities that if they cannot liberate us, they should bomb us." That phrase still reverberates in my ears, as that sad and terrified girl told it to me. That phrase, which I heard on subsequent occasions as well, from other Yazidis, was uttered in vain. Indeed, the terrorist organization Da'esh abducted over 6,500 Yazidi women and children. For two years, four months and eighteen days, our women and girls have been sold in slave markets and have been subjected to sexual slavery and the slave trade in the worst phenomenon of modern history, because Da'esh has taken us back to the age of slavery and the slave trade, where a twelve-year-old girl is sold for a pack of cigarettes. Those crimes are an embarrassment to humankind. The international

community remained silent in the face of all that has happened and is happening still.

Since 3 August 2014, the suffering of Yazidi has continued. Women, in particular, and indeed, Yazidi mothers have to choose between being raped themselves or having their own children raped before their very eyes. That is how we are treated by Da'esh. The virginity of our girls has become the portal to paradise, according to the laws and ideals of Da'esh. The majority were presented as presents during Da'esh festivities or religious competitions. What Da'esh is doing is based on extremist precepts based on fatwahs and religious texts within Islamic jurisprudence. We know that Islam also contains moderate ideas and principles, but the worst part is that Muslim political and religious leaders have remained silent in the face of what Da'esh is doing. That has led to our sadness and fear.

There is no clear fatwah stating that the murder of the Yazidis or non-Muslims is a sin. There is no fatwah that clearly states those who commit such crimes are infidels. There is no such fatwa. We have heard no clear expressions of sympathy from leaders. We are facing a perniciousphenomenon that affects all States, including those that are stable and democratic. We need only consider the terrible attack yesterday in Germany and the murder of the Russian Ambassador in Turkey, committed in cold blood while the terrorists shouted religious slogans.

The international community must eradicate terrorism and eliminate its sources of financing. Da'esh could not commit all those massacres without support. The Yazidis are victims who have paid a very heavy price and been forced to leave the countries where they have lived for thousands of years. Some have been freed, but genocide has been committed and the Council has been unable to stop it. When selected areas have been reopened, we find the mass graves of Yazidi men, women and even disabled people. Yazidis have often been the victims of murder. If the international community does not provide us with protection, other groups will commit similar crimes and once again thousands of women and girls will become sexual slaves.

We cannot compromise with the honour and dignity of our women and girls. I would ask members to imagine for a few seconds that their son or daughter became the object of a lucrative trade by terrorists or was brainwashed and became a terrorist. Those are very sad images, but unfortunately we them experience every day. That is the reality we witness daily; it is a twenty-first century reality. Our women and our children are brought to slave markets, much like in medieval times. How can the human conscience stand for that? More than 6,500 Yazidi women were abducted but no military operation was carried out to free them. Where is justice? More than 3,000 women and children were freed by various means through the help of an office of the Government of Kurdistan entrusted with the affairs of kidnapped individuals and others.

The Yazidi religious leaders adopted a declaration facilitating the reintegration victims and their provision of special assistance. We are very grateful, but there are more than 3,000 abducted women who are not treated as prisoners of war, but used as sexual slaves, shared and exchanged among fighters. We understand that the international community has expressed sympathy for our plight, but it must act to stop the genocide and to protect our women so that they do not become objects of such slavery.

To ensure the freedom of more than 3,000 Yazidi women who remain in the hands of Da'esh, I request that Yazidi areas be protected. I also ask for the protection of other minorities to prevent the recurrence of genocide and the enslavement of women. There is a need to evacuate more than 4,000 immigrants from Turkey and other countries, who currently live in very difficult conditions, and to give the Yazidis, particularly those who have been victims of slavery, opportunities to immigrate, as Germany has done.

There are 100,000 displaced persons and refugees in camps in Kurdistan. Despite the liberation of Yazidi areas, they have been unable to return and need the Council's support given their humanitarian and health problems. They need to be provided with consistent support to face the problems of genocide and sexual enslavement. We encourage the International Criminal Court to investigate those crimes. I hope that our requests will be considered so that we are able to survive in dignity.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Hasan for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Taha.

Ms. Taha (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the Spanish delegation for organizing this meeting on human trafficking and for inviting me to speak to the Council today. I would also like to thank the United

States delegation for inviting me to address the Council for the first time a year ago (see S/PV.7585). I also thank the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and its Executive Director, Mr. Yury Fedotov, for appointing me Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking.

When I was here in December 2015, I testified about crimes of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) committed against me and the Yazidi community. I told the Council about how ISIS attacked my village of Kocho, how they rounded up all the men and killed more than 700 of them in a single day, including six of my brothers. I told the Council that my mother was killed along with other older women. I also recounted that I was enslaved by ISIS for sexual slavery, along with more than 6,000 other Yazidi women and children. I spoke about my ordeal — how we were bought, sold and treated like property. I also explained how I was raped by ISIS militants multiple times per day.

Since I first sat before the Council, the ISIS genocidal campaign against Yazidis has continued. As of today, more than 3,000 Yazidis remain in captivity. More than 350,000 Yazidis, along with more than 1.5 million other refugees, continue to live under difficult conditions in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. In my own family, two of my sisters-in-law, two nieces and two nephews are still hostages of ISIS. A year ago, my beloved niece Katherine was killed in an explosion as she attempted to escape ISIS territory on foot. She was just 18-years old.

My family has tried to rescue my nephew Malik, now 13-years old. Malik has sometimes called us from captivity, and we have learned that he has been held at an ISIS training camp in Raqqa and is being trained as a child soldier. A few months ago, a rescuer was able to find Malik alone at a bakery in Raqqa. Malik refused to try to escape with the rescuer, saying that Yazidis are infidels who should convert and join ISIS. I am worried sick that he will soon be on the front lines. Another one of my nieces, Nasreen, remains in captivity. She was just 16-years old when she was kidnapped by ISIS. As we sit here having this discussion, she is probably being tortured by ISIS militants three times her age.

Three months ago, I came to the United Nations with my lawyer, Amal Clooney. We asked the Security Council to establish an independent body to investigate the crimes committed by ISIS against all Iraqis. We have pointed out that the Iraqi Government made that request and that it was the least the Council could do in the face of ISIS' systematic atrocities. We said that the evidence was disappearing and time was running out.

There has been some progress. The United Kingdom has shown great leadership in the Security Council in proposing the establishment of an international response to the global threat posed by ISIS, including by setting up a mechanism to gather evidence of international crimes committed by ISIS in Iraq. The representatives of that country have spoken about that this year at the United Nations including just last week at an event at which the Attorney General spoke when Amal Clooney and I met with representatives of France, the United States and Russia. They were generally positive with regard to the idea of establishing such a mechanism in cooperation with the Iraqi Government. The Iraqi Government has also encouraged it, as well. Since the high-level summit of the General Assembly this fall in New York, we have discussed it in Baghdad and London. Six weeks ago, the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs also committed to working with the United Kingdom to implement a United Nations-led campaign to act and preserve evidence of crimes committed by Da'esh. I would like to thank Foreign Minister Al-Jaafari and Prime Minister Al Abadi for voicing support for that initiative.

However, time is running out, and statements of support are not enough. Action needs to be taken. But I do not know what more it will take for the Council to act. I do not understand how there is no court able to prosecute the perpetrators of crimes committed against Yazidis or any independent body to investigate them. I do not understand why the bodies of my murdered mother and brothers still lie unprotected and unexamined in mass graves. I do not understand how ISIS militants can publish evidence of their crimes online and fail to be arrested. I do not know how it is that, although ISIS has no friends on the Council, the latter still does not move forward. I am not a diplomat, and my message is not political. My fight is one for all Iraqis who have suffered at the hands of ISIS. My cause is that it can never be wrong to collect evidence of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, and that it is imperative, if we are not able to stop such crimes, that we at least commit to establishing a record of them.

Therefore, on behalf of all Iraqis who have suffered at the hands of ISIS, I call on Prime Minister Al

Abadi to send a letter to the Security Council asking for the establishment of an international independent commission for Iraq to investigate and document the crimes committed by ISIS. I hope that the Council will then act swiftly to create such a commission. My fight is one for justice, and I know that justice is important to all victims of human trafficking throughout the world. Yet many survivors whom I have met feel abandoned and ignored. Minority groups see themselves as forgotten and left to become a footnote of history. Women and children in conflict areas are sacrificed instead of being protected.

The worlds' most powerful nations that are represented here can stop that by ensuring that human traffickers face punishment for their crimes; contributing to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, which was established by the General Assembly to provide critical assistance and support to survivors; by providing assistance to the establishment of international safe zones; and by taking in refugees who are fleeing brutal wars, as countries such as Germany, France, the United States, Canada and Australia have already done or pledged to do with regard to the Yazidis. Today, I ask members to take a first step towards ensuring justice is done for Iraqi and other victims of war, genocide and human trafficking so that, one day, I can face my abusers in a court of law and tell them what they have done, and so that other victims of war terror and those who abuse them learn that this is what the United Nations stands for and does.

We have waited long enough.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Taha for her very meaningful briefing.

On behalf of all the members of the Security Council, I thank all the briefers for their very informative briefings.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/1073, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Albania, Andorra, Angola, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Palau, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Vanuatu.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2331 (2016).

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as President of the Government of Spain.

I wish to begin my statement by warmly thanking the following for their presence participation in today's debate: Secretary-General Ban-Ki-moon; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Ms. Zainab Hava Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan; and Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha.

This meeting is particularly important for Spain not only because of the topic's relevance but also because it is the last debate that my country shall convene as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. Moreover, human trafficking is a clear affront to human dignity and also represents a threat to international peace and security in conflict and terrorism-related situations. It is a reincarnation of slavery in the midst of the twenty-first century. Leaders from throughout the world and representatives of civil society have underscored the moral imperative of combating human trafficking and all modern forms of slavery. The victims, the majority of whom are women and children, require — as was stated here — an urgent response, in particular by the Security Council.

My delegation proposes a paradigm shift recognizing that national judicial systems can break down in conflict situations. Under those circumstances,

action by the Security Council becomes necessary. It is on that basis that we proposed resolution 2331 (2016), the first resolution in the history of the Security Council on this tragic phenomenon.

With this open debate, we are beginning to engage in what will be a deep reflection upon what contributions the Council can make to condemn human trafficking in areas of conflicts and the situations of exploitation to which that trafficking leads. We also propose exploring means of strengthening the normative framework in the area of sanctions, financial flows, victim protection and assistance and developing a more effective strategy in the fight against human trafficking in areas of conflict. The response of the United Nations to the scourge of human trafficking continues to be fragmented. Eradicating this scourge requires more than just the efforts of a single region, country, or department or agency of the United Nations. It requires efforts from all parties concerned, including the Council.

Unfortunately, the connection between conflict and human trafficking is not a new one. The novel element is the use of human trafficking as a tactic in terrorism in the economy of war by groups like Da'esh, Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. We have just heard the shocking account of a brave survivor, Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, who is now a strong defender of the rights of the Yazidi people in Iraq and the winner of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. We have also heard from someone who risked her life to rescue many of those victims, Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan. Both of them, along with Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, have explained how Da'esh is openly promoting the trafficking and enslavement of women and children, thereby defying the most elemental norms of international law.

However, trafficking in situations of conflict is not limited to the context of terrorism. The conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Libya and the Sahel — just to mention a few — are leading to the mass displacement of particularly vulnerable groups. That renders them even more vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking networks. Like many other countries, at the end of 2015, Spain adopted a new comprehensive plan to fight human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Also in 2015, my Government strengthened coordination between civil society organizations and our State security agencies. We have worked to develop a counternarrative to extremism as part of our national strategy to fight violent extremism. My country has put in place a communication strategy on cyberspace that includes a counternarrative to radicalization. In that regard, it is essential to monitor social networks in order to prevent extremism and gain knowledge of any radical content that could lead to trafficking.

The next five years afford us a historic opportunity for us to place the fight against the worst forms of exploitation at the top of the list of United Nations priorities. While important progress has been made in certain areas, much remains to be done. In that regard, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his efforts in combating sexual exploitation and abuse and his zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual violence, which in some cases is perpetrated by Blue Helmets. I would like to conclude by stating that my country will resolutely support all efforts to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice and that they serve their sentences. Let us strengthen our efforts to achieve that goal. That is what I ask of everyone today.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the other members of the Council.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ukraine aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union and wishes to make the following statement in its national capacity.

First of all, taking advantage of the fact that the President of the Government of Spain is presiding over the Security Council, I would like to express, on behalf of Ukraine, our sincere gratitude and appreciation for Spain's contribution to the work of the Council and its dedication and effectiveness during these two years. The active participation of Ambassador Oyarzun Marchesi and his team on such important issues on the Council's agenda, such as the fight against terrorism, non-proliferation and the promotion of human rights, serves as an example for permanent and non-permanent members of the Council.

In particular, we appreciate the consistent and persistent position of Spain in the promotion of gender equality. Resolution 2242 (2015), the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, which was established by the delegations of Spain and Great Britain, and the launch of the Network of National Coordinators for Women and Peace and Security are

just a few of the examples of real achievements made by Spain to improve the efficiency of the Organization, particularly of the Security Council

I would also like to emphasize the importance of the topic proposed for discussion in today's open debate. The issue of human trafficking has been the focus of attention of the United Nations in recent decades. The Palermo Protocol of 2000 and the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons of 2010 are cornerstones and key documents for all States Members of the Organization. Nonetheless, in recent years, we have observed an evolution of human trafficking, especially in situations of conflict and post-conflict. In different parts of the world affected by conflict, sexual violence is used as a destructive tactic of war or terrorism, as well as one of the key elements of the ideology and activities of extremist groups such as Boko Haram and Da'esh. The terrorist groups that I just mentioned are openly promoting human trafficking as part of their military strategy or as a source of funding. That is why the connection between phenomena like human trafficking, sexual violence in conflict situations and the activities of terrorist organizations requires special attention from the Security Council.

The adoption of resolution 2331 (2016) is a timely measure that demonstrates the ability of the Security Council to respond to the new challenges and threats that arise in the area of peace and security. We cannot close our eyes in the face of the situation on the ground. We cannot wait for the number of victims of sexual exploitation and sexual violence related to trafficking to reach the terrible numbers of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina or the genocide in Rwanda.

A constant problem is the underestimation of data on sexual violence in conflicts. That is mainly because of stigma, fear of reprisals, lack of access for monitoring and inadequate means to ensure accountability. That is why it is important that the resolution adopted today be a new tool for the Security Council that helps facilitate the assessment of the situation on the ground in conflict zones and post-conflict situations. That will allow us to study and reflect on in future reports of the Secretary-General the problem of the connection between human trafficking and the activities of traffickers and terrorist groups.

Ukraine strongly supports international efforts to combat all forms of human rights violations and abuses in conflict and post-conflict situations. The fight against trafficking in persons was identified as one of the priorities of the Government of Ukraine in the area of the protection of human rights.

At the same time, I would like to reiterate my country's request to include in the respective mandates of the Organization consideration of the problem of sexual violence in the Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied by Russia. In view of the fact that Ukraine's police and security agencies do not have access to the territory of Crimea, which is occupied by Russia, or to certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which are controlled by terrorists supported by Russia, we must resolve the problem of the verification and documentation of cases of sexual violence in those territories in order to provide support and assistance to victims.

I am convinced that General Assembly resolution 71/202, adopted yesterday, on human rights in the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea provides the United Nations with the necessary authority to compel Russia to fulfil its responsibilities as an occupying Power, as it is defined in the resolution. It is sad that we are talking about a country that, as a permanent member of the Security Council, must assume special responsibility to fulfil the Charter of the United Nations, even though it became a State Member of the United Nations only 25 years ago.

Finally, I would like to mention another issue of great importance to all of us, that is, accountability and the prosecution of perpetrators of human trafficking and crimes of sexual violence in conflict. The high level of impunity for those who commit such crimes in conflict is unacceptable, as the repetition of those crimes creates a vicious cycle of criminality. Together with the provision of psychological, social and medical support to victims, we consider the fight against impunity a priority.

Mr. Stewart (United Kingdom): Allow me to begin by putting on record our deep condolences to the family of the Russian Ambassador for the terrible tragedy in Turkey.

The testimony that we heard from Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha has really brought home to us, through the specificity of her experience, the horror of what she experienced: her six brothers killed, the stories of what happened to Catherine or indeed to her nephew, Malik. The story that she has shared with us is not simply a story of violence, but in everything that

she said she underscored the way in which these are forms of violence, of coercion, of slavery and, in their systematic and deliberate nature, forms of war.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Spanish delegation for bringing resolution 2331 (2016) forward, and to the analytical clarity with which Ms. Zainab Bangura in particular, and the Spanish Government in drafting the resolution, has brought to our analysis this problem, by which I mean specifically the ways in which, in paragraphs 8 and 9, we focused on the mechanics of human trafficking in conflict — on the ways in which it is used for recruitment, for financing, for destroying communities, for displacing communities, for gathering intelligence, for advancing ideology; the ways in which this violence can be perpetrated through rape, through sexual slavery, through forced prostitution and pregnancy. This detailed, rigorous and analytical description does not minimize or distract from, in fact it amplifies, the horror of what we are witnessing.

Personally, having been in Iraq in 2014 immediately after the situation in Sinjar and having seen directly Yazidi families struggling in those immediate first few days with the death of family members who had been kidnapped and removed from them, I could not believe, as someone who had been working in Iraq since 2013, the depth of that horror. Indeed, on my trip to Iraq just two and a half weeks ago I saw how permanent the scars of what the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham has done within refugee camps — the damage it has done to communities, to countries and, above all, to a civilization.

However, today we are really at this meeting to focus on practical action, so I just want to take a little time to make three brief observations on practical action: the first is about our approach, the second is about implementation and the third is about bureaucracy. Humility needs to be fundamental to our approach. We must take into account how difficult it is to operate in a conflict environment; how difficult it is to access; to provide protection; how difficult it is to protect and to prosecute; how honest we have to be about the gaps in our knowledge; how much we need to learn from what the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) does in other areas — in counter narcotics, illegal wildlife trade and terrorism. However, we must also consider the ways in which this can be quite specific, both in the nature of the violence but also in the context in which it operates, whether it is in Mosul, in Nigeria or with Boko Haram or with Da'esh.

On implementation, I would like to pay tribute to the Spanish Government, particularly for two elements, the focus in paragraph 2 (d) on victim identification and the focus in paragraphs 19 and 20 on training, in particular that of peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. At the heart of our response there needs to be not just an understanding of what we ought to do, but what we can do, in particular an understanding of our own bureaucracies and the impediments and problems in those bureaucracies. Therefore, we have been very clear on the challenges around predeployment training, readiness standards, needs assessments and technical capacity. But the next stage needs to be to really understand our agencies — to really understand what reform will mean within UNODC, the International Labour Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration — and the ways in which that connects to what civil society is doing and to what officials in the countries concerned are doing. It is very easy to sit around a table like this and talk in the abstract about coordination, but this is fundamentally about resources, institutional culture and about training in the broader sense.

Within the United Kingdom, we are focusing on two things. We are focusing, as Nadia said, on the issue of accountability in Iraq and with the Iraqi Government. Our Prime Minister has set up a task force on modern-day slavery, whose focus is above all on practical learning, on coordination and on implementation.

In conclusion, this meeting today is in many ways and optimistic moment. It is exactly the kind of thing that the Council should be focused on — because of its transnational nature and the non-State actors involved. We owe huge thanks both to the Spanish leadership and the multilateral Organization we exist within and for the way that is being connected with the analytical rigor, which is being provided by the officials and by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and also the way in which that connects to the human testimony from Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan and Nadia, which connects the rhetoric of this Chamber to the reality on the ground. However, we are not just at this meeting to describe the world, we are here to change it. That is going to involve some very difficult conversations within our own bureaucracies and agencies on reform — reform that is needed because this relates to our deepest moral intuitions and our deepest moral obligations.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I thank you, Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, President of the Government of Spain, for convening this important meeting and for presiding over it yourself. My thanks also go to our briefers, who have spoken clearly on concrete crimes, with striking power and courage to reveal these attacks against human dignity that taking place even now on the ground.

Japan welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2331 (2016), which is the very first resolution of the Council to address trafficking in persons in conflict. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the strong leadership of Spain in guiding us towards this goal.

Japan welcomes the resolution, which makes it clear that trafficking in persons is connected to sexual violence, terrorism and other international organized criminal activities and also that it exemplifies how trafficking in persons in armed conflict and sexual violence can be and is used as a tactic by certain terrorist groups.

Trafficking in persons in conflict situations is a violation of human dignity and human rights, but it does not stop there. It is being used more and more systematically, sometimes accompanied by sexual violence, by terrorist groups and non-State actors as a tool for fundraising, recruitment and the destruction of communities. In such cases it poses serious threats to international peace and security. The international community is responsible for removing this threat by holding those who engage in such activities accountable.

The briefings heard by the Council today, especially from Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, convince us of the urgent need to take action to combat this problem. In order to accurately recognize and address the situation effectively, the Security Council needs to have relevant information. This resolution promotes information-sharing in the Council by requesting the Secretary-General to report on trafficking in persons in armed conflict and by welcoming briefings to be submitted to the Council by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) and other relevant actors.

Furthermore, the resolution expresses the Council's intention to integrate this issue into the work of the relevant sanctions committees, in accordance with their mandates, to invite the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and on Children and Armed Conflict to brief those committees. I am confident that such steps will enable us to move forward effectively.

Japan acknowledges that the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol on trafficking in persons are essential as an international framework to combat trafficking in persons. It is necessary to ensure that the spirit of the Convention is reflected in national laws of Member States and effectively implemented.

In that regard, Japan attaches great importance to the assistance provided by the relevant entities, such as UNDOC and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence, including on legislation and law enforcement. We expect them to make further progress and we strongly support their critical work.

In concluding, I would like to reaffirm Japan's commitment to contributing to the efforts of all to combat the trafficking of persons in conflict.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to reiterate our expressions of solidarity and condolences to the Government and the people of the Russian Federation folowing the brutal assassination of their Ambassador, Andrey Karlov ,yesterday in Turkey. We call for an end to hate speech against the Russian Federation regarding the situation in the Middle East.

We are honoured by your presence, Sir, Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, as President of the Government of Spain, at this important open debate. This is the final debate in which we will participate as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. We also wish to express our warmest congratulations for the work of your Ambassador, Sir, Mr. Román Oyarzun Marchesi, who, along with the Spanish team, has done excellent work during your membership of the Security Council.

We also appreciate the briefings given by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Mr. Yury Fedotov and Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura. We especially wish to thank Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan and Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha for their courage and for reminding us once again today of the consequences and trauma experienced by victims of war and terrorism, in this case in one of its most perverse forms: trafficking in persons and sexual violence.

Venezuela furthermore wishes to align itself with the statement to be delivered by the delegation of the

Kingdom of Bahrain on behalf of the Group of Friends against Trafficking in Persons.

The information provided by today's briefers and Nadia Murad Basee Taha's wrenching testimony in particular could not have been more eloquent or revealing. Her sad experience regarding the murder of her family and the situation in her village demonstrate the brutal nature of the war taking place in the Middle East.

It is unacceptable to us that human beings are used by criminal and terrorist groups as spoils of war. We are witnessing a tragedy that is being experienced by thousands of people, especially women and children. In addition to the horrors of armed conflict, they are victims of trafficking and sexual violence: crimes that attack human dignity in the most perverse of ways and, depending on the circumstances, constitute flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and international conventions on human rights and on transnational organized crime.

Trafficking in persons is a transnational crime from which no country is exempt. Nevertheless, it is necessary to highlight that the reasons for and causes that promote this type of crime — and the fact that extremist and terrorist groups use trafficking in persons and sexual violence as part of their strategic goals and to finance their criminal activities — have been exacerbated in recent years due to situations of armed conflict in various regions of the world, such as the Middle East and North Africa, and in particular in Iraq, Syria, Libya and the Sahel. In the case of the latter, due to the destruction of the social fabric of the Sahel region of Africa, terrorism has been spread throughout the Lake Chad basin by groups such as Boko Haram, which operate in various countries.

In the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in 2014, it was acknowledged that, prior to the year 2011, when the Syrian conflict began, it was very rare to identify victims of trafficking of Syrian nationality. In the briefing given by Mr. Fedotov a year ago he stated that since the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant began its uprising in the north of the country, victims of trafficking from Iraq and Syria have been more frequently identified in various parts of the world.

The report of the Secretary-General on sexual violence in armed conflicts (S/2016/361) highlighted the fact that in the past two years sexual violence has been increasingly linked to the strategic, ideological and financial objectives of extremist and terrorist groups. Venezuela recognizes that trafficking in persons and sexual violence are being used by some extremist and terrorist groups as a terror tactic and also to finance this scourge. Moreover, the enslavement and trafficking of women and children demonstrates their absolute disregard towards women and their intolerance and hatred of other races, cultures and religions. It is the clearest sign of the brutal and despicable nature of those extremist groups, which will have to be brought to justice.

All the information we have available to us clearly points to the fact that the training, equipping and promotion of non-State actors, whose actions are based on violent extremism, are aimed at promoting the break-up of States for political reasons and the creation of such groups as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, the Al-Nusra Front and the Army of Conquerors. They also facilitate the commission of various atrocities, war crimes and crimes against humanity against the population, in particular against the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children.

In that regard, we once again demand that all actors in the international community prevent those kinds of crimes. The best way to do that is to fully respect the standards and provisions of international law and the relevant resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly relating to the prohibition on providing weapons and financial and logistical support to such non-State violent groups, who often become terrorist groups. That way we can effectively decrease their operational capacity and, consequently, reduce the number of various crimes related to trafficking in persons and sexual violence. Ending trafficking in persons and sexual violence in armed conflicts means being fully committed to resolving armed conflicts wherever such crimes occur.

While we need to confront the criminal mafias that engage in human trafficking and take advantage of the tragedy of millions of human beings, we must also act in a coherent political and moral way, without encouraging armed conflicts that are based on economic and geopolitical interests. In that way, we can avoid the tragic consequences that we want to eradicate today, but which were not given due consideration when some countries irresponsibly supported military aggression in Iraq, Libya and now in Syria. In the Security Council

we need to expend a huge effort to put a stop and to rectify the irreparable suffering of millions of people and the destruction of entire societies.

We believe that accountability is one of the most important aspects related to the prevention of this kind of crime. We cannot accept impunity for this kind of crime. Venezuela is in favour of effective accountability for all forms of sexual violence. Exemplary sanctions should be applied to all instigators and perpetrators of those crimes, including the adoption of targeted sanctions, in accordance with the mechanisms established by the Security Council. Just as important is the establishment and the scaling-up of national institutional capacities related to justice, health care and social welfare systems in countries in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict, so that, while fully respecting the sovereignty of the States concerned, we can develop and build their capacities with the goal of providing due attention to the victims.

We believe that we have sound legal instruments at hand that could make it possible for us to combat the crime of trafficking in human beings and also to cover situations of armed conflict. An example is the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. That is an instrument that has almost reached universal membership. We also have the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, including provisions pertaining to examining this problem in situations of conflict. In 2017, there will be a full review of that Plan of Action. It will be an ideal opportunity to strengthen the Plan and to address the challenges that we are currently dealing with.

Resolution 2332 (2016), adopted today by consensus in the Security Council, is an extraordinary and concrete contribution by the Security Council on this topic for those situations of armed conflict that we were discussing. Also, it clearly points to the need to have better strategic coordination of efforts in order to prevent trafficking in persons and sexual violence and also to confront it, in line with efforts to combat violent extremism, which could lead to terrorism.

In addition, I would like to add that the nature of both crimes and the measures aimed at their effective prevention and eradication in the context of armed conflict also requires forms of broadened democratic discussion that ensures the full participation of Member States, with the goal of coordinating and establishing synergies together with the various entities of the United Nations that have a remit in that area and with different regional and subregional mechanisms.

To conclude, Venezuela would like to reiterate its commitment to contribute to strengthening the institutional, administrative and judicial instruments that are key in the fight to eradicate those horrendous and barbaric crimes against humanity, which are an affront to civilization and to the modern world. They are a pressing responsibility for the Organization if we want to see its noble purposes and principles become a reality.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to thank you, Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, President of the Government of Spain, for presiding over today's open debate. I also thank the briefers for their comprehensive statements. We congratulate Spain on having convened this open debate, which is of particular importance in the current context, given the unprecedented mass migration crisis, with refugees and internally displaced persons becoming the main targets of traffickers.

Trafficking in persons in situations of conflict is a global problem. It concerns not only the countries of origin, but also the transit and destination countries of victims, the countries in which those criminal networks operate and those through which money passes for those networks. And the list could continue.

Human trafficking is a means of subjugating and using human beings for profit. It gravely violates their human rights. Through abuses and violence, it degrades the victims' human condition and turns them into commodities. It removes their physical and emotional integrity. It is a threat to all of society and affects the well-being of communities and the security of nations. According to the *World Report on Human Trafficking* of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), that phenomenon affects practically all regions of the world. UNODC has identified at least 510 flows of transnational trafficking in persons. Most of those victims are targeted for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

Those conflicts and humanitarian crises only increase the risks of human trafficking. They find fertile ground in economic desperation and in the weakening of the rule of law and fewer social services. As a result, people are forced to leave their homes, and

even their countries of residence. In that regard, when a country is in a situation of conflict, the rule of law in its territory can be weakened. That creates greater freedom of action for those organizations that seek to exploit the institutional weaknesses for their illegal activities, such as human trafficking. Even if we deem that today one of the main elements that creates human trafficking situations in conflict situations is the self-described Islamic State and its associated groups, we need to bear in mind that those crimes are also perpetrated by other actors that operate in the same violent manner in others regions of the world.

Resolution 2231 (2016), which we have unanimously adopted today, which Uruguay co-sponsored, roundly condemns human trafficking in armed conflict-affected areas. That is a cross-cutting and multifaceted phenomenon. Unfortunately, it is being replicated and it is affecting very fragile areas of the world where people are living in situations of high vulnerability. Uruguay wishes to highlight several elements in the resolution that we believe are extremely important.

First, the resolution calls for ratifying and implementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Those agreements make up the international legal framework of rules and obligations to ensure that States develop international instruments to combat trafficking in persons.

Secondly, the resolution highlights the need for cooperation and exchange of information. In that regard, Uruguay positively views the growing connection between the work of UNODC, the Secretary-General and the Security Council, since increasingly trafficking in persons is linked to armed conflicts and threats to international peace and security. We welcome the work of UNODC as the guardian of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

Thirdly, the resolution addresses sexual violence and the strengthening of the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Uruguay condemns the use of sexual violence by any party as a terrorist tactic to further such an agenda. Those practices have led to the development of a growing nexus between trafficking in persons and conflict, thereby violating the rights of thousands of women and children within the context of war.

Another significant aspect is training. The complexity of human trafficking means there needs to be greater awareness, in addition to specialized training within that scope for as many people as possible, but especially for the officials and points of contact to whom it is most likely victims will turn, such as police and military officers, help centres, consulates and embassies, among others.

Furthermore, we recognize the role of civil society in providing assistance and support to victims. In that regard, Uruguay has concluded drafting a comprehensive preliminary bill to prevent and fight trafficking in and exploitation of persons that underscores the human rights of the victims as a top priority. It also calls upon diplomatic missions to engage in trafficking prevention activities, promote training for staff, make available information easily accessible and create support initiatives for victims. Moreover, the resolution emphasizes the need to reintegrate victims into society and adopt mechanisms to protect and support them.

Uruguay, as a country committed to promoting, protecting and upholding human rights, wishes to underpin the need to provide comprehensive assistance to the victims of trafficking in persons. We must focus on their recovery and reintegration into society, and not just penalize the crime in question. The victims must receive assistance and legal and psycho-social protection. Furthermore, for Uruguay, it is key that the victims of human trafficking not be punished for crimes that they may have committed, if it is determined that they were subjected to trafficking at the time of committing those crimes.

Uruguay also believes that activities related to trafficking in persons not be restricted to the time period of a given conflict. The frameworks for action in the wake of armed conflict are also lacking in terms of shortcomings within the justice system and compliance with the law, in addition to an organized civil society that can file complaints about such situations. That is why our country believes that the work of UNODC and the Security Council should be carried out in close coordination with the Peacebuilding Commission with a view to preventing territories in post-conflict situations from turning into fertile grounds for criminal organizations.

By way of conclusion, we believe, in short, that fighting trafficking in persons in conflict situations requires efforts and cooperation from the international community as a whole in order to address the needs of those who are most vulnerable, such as women and children. To that end, we must take appropriate action both internally and internationally. We must recognize that we are the ones that are responsible for effecting real change, which we can do by taking a broad, comprehensive and multifaceted approach to the issue of trafficking in persons in conflict situations, something that requires determination and political will. The international community can count on Uruguay's firm commitment in that vein.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of France, I would like to begin by expressing our deepest condolences and sincere sympathy to all those who have been struck by the tragic terrorist attacks over the past two days.

Allow me to warmly thank the Spanish presidency for organizing this especially important debate and to congratulate it for its tireless efforts that have led to the adoption of resolution 2331 (2016). It is an excellent illustration of the outstanding Spanish presidency and the exceptional work carried out by its Ambassador to the United Nations and his team. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his presence here and for his commitment to the topic, as well as to Ms. Bangura and Mr. Fedotov for their always enlightening briefings. Finally, I would also like to particularly thank Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan and Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha for their moving testimonies, the reminder that they have offered us and their fight, which is also our fight.

France aligns itself with the statement that will be made by the Anti-Trafficking Coordinator of the European Union.

Trafficking in persons is one of the most profitable and widespread means of trafficking around the world. The actions committed by Da'esh and Boko Haram dramatically illustrate the link between trafficking of persons, often related to sexual violence, and terrorism. For those terrorist groups, the first victims claimed are generally women and children. And trafficking in persons is not only a way of sowing terror among civilian populations, but it is also used as a source of financing or recruitment tool.

In Syria women suffer the worst types of atrocities — rape, forced marriage and prostitution are the daily lot for the people who live in the areas controlled by Da'esh. Da'esh has established an actual market in Iraq, where women and girls from minorities, such as Yazidis or Christians, are sold to be used as sexual slaves. The United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic confirmed in its June 2016 report to the Human Rights Council that crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide were committed by Da'esh against young Yazidi women. In West Africa, particularly in Nigeria, Boko Haram has tortured, raped and held as prisoners hundreds of women and children.

Those acts are not only unacceptable from a moral point of view, but they constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and, in some cases, crimes of genocide. Terrorist groups that commit such atrocities take what it means to be human to new lows. Those responsible for such crimes will be held accountable before the court of law. To confront such crimes, we must act in the name of protection — protection of civilians, obviously, especially of women and children, but also protection of international humanitarian law and the very principles of our Organization.

For France, the fight against trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, and the fight against sexual violence committed against them in situations of conflict, is an absolute top priority. Such priority has led France to take action on the various fronts in this important fight. France is involved in numerous bilateral and regional cooperation efforts to help the most vulnerable States in confronting such a scourge. France also actively participates in capacity-building programmes of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), particularly in West Africa. And my country has been the largest contributor to the UNODC funds for human trafficking since its establishment in 2010.

France has spared no effort, and will spare no effort, to mobilize the international community in this fight. Following the conference that took place in Paris in September 2015 on the victims of religious and ethnic violence in the Middle East, during France's presidency of the Council in June we organized a debate (see S/PV.7704) on trafficking in persons and sexual violence in conflict situations. We commend the fact that some of the recommendations formulated during that debate were reflected in resolution 2331 (2016),

presented by Spain. Finally, UNODC will present tomorrow, with the support of France, its biennial global report on trafficking in persons.

The Security Council shoulders a collective responsibility in the fight against trafficking in persons in conflict situations. We have at our disposal the relevant international legal framework — the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, including the protocol dedicated to combating human trafficking. It is within that framework that we need to strengthen our engagement. Human trafficking and sexual violence committed in situations of conflict are too often considered as separate from the threats to international peace and security that are reviewed by the Security Council. In fact, those practices are part and parcel of the strategies of such terrorist groups as Da'esh and Boko Haram, and indeed are a threat to international peace and security. As the threat of terrorism evolves, we must evolve with it.

I would therefore like to conclude by echoing one of the main messages of the resolution: the need to better take into account the link between human trafficking, sexual violence and terrorism, which for the very first time has been clearly recognized as a threat to international peace and security — a potentially crucial breakthrough. Following presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25, adopted in December 2015, the Council has taken a major step forward today. On that basis, a more in depth analysis of the threat and identification of the individuals and entities that, through their actions, are involved in human trafficking, is necessary. That work should be carried out jointly by the entities in charge of the fight against terrorism in the United Nations: the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

In the face of such appalling crimes and challenges to human conscience, it is our collective responsibility to act in order to put an end to those crimes and prosecute those responsible for such actions without let-up. The resolution that we have adopted today gives us additional legal instruments to move ahead in that direction. Let us unite our efforts to make the best possible use of those instruments.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I wish once again to warmly welcome the President of the Government of Spain to the Security Council and to express to him my appreciation for his presiding earlier over our meeting today. His presence here today is a clear indication of the importance that Spain attaches to this issue. The focus on the phenomenon of human trafficking in armed conflict, which highlights a disturbing trend that warrants strengthened international action, is indeed commendable and timely.

Allow me to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the other briefers for their respective briefings and steadfast commitment to addressing the issue of human trafficking in their work. I also wish to thank Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan and Ms. Nadia Murad for their harrowing and powerful testimonies. Their courage and fortitude in the face of unspeakable horrors should compel us to act, and demands to be matched by the strongest resolve from the international community to ensure that the detestable treatment that they and others have experienced is not repeated.

Trafficking in persons is abhorrent in any context; on that there is universal agreement. Human trafficking entails the extrajudicial judgment that certain groups of people, whether on the basis of ethnicity, faith, gender, economic status, age or other random criteria, are inferior lots and can be used as a means to an end. Human traffickers strip people of their dignity and negate the respect inherent to all humankind, thereby debasing their victims as mere chattel for the profit of others. Such twisted concepts and beliefs are especially pernicious in situations of armed conflict, where the vulnerability of civilian communities renders them prime targets for such horrendous acts.

Moreover, we are currently witnessing a nightmare scenario in which non-State armed groups that expose violent and extremist ideologies are actively engaging in human trafficking activities to fulfil their distorted visions of the world. Da'esh and its ilk have shown that they are capable of immense cruelty through the prevalant use of sexual violence and the enslavement and trade of women and girls for recruitment and financial purposes. In that regard, the practices of groups such as Da'esh and Boko Haram in perpetuating sexual violence, including through the trafficking of women and children, demands heightened and greater attention and responses from the Council. Malaysia is therefore pleased to have supported and co-sponsored resolution 2331 (2016), just adopted. That resolution marks an important contribution to reinforcing the existing international framework to combat trafficking in persons, particularly where that is being used to fuel

terrorist activities. We wish to highlight three aspects that we believe will make a real difference in tackling the scourge.

First, as with all transnational crime, strengthening cooperation and coordination between Member States, as well as regional and international organizations, is imperative. In that regard, we call upon Member States that have yet to subscribe to and implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its additional protocols, which provide the principal foundation for our concerted action, to do so. We also encourage Member States to prioritize ratifications of other international instruments that complement efforts to eradicate human trafficking in all its forms, such as the relevant protocols of the International Labour Organization, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, among others.

Given the multifaceted dimensions of trafficking in persons, including where it is associated with sexual violence and funding terrorist activities, it is crucial that the international community mobilize complementary legal means, where available, to investigate, disrupt and dismantle trafficking networks. We fully support the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other bodies, as well as bilateral partners, in providing technical support to Member States to build law enforcement capacities.

Within the South-East Asian region, our Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) neighbours have demonstrated a unified commitment to combating and preventing trafficking in persons in the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and its related plan of action, established in November 2015. We appreciate the strong support for such regional-level efforts by East Asia Summit partners, as reflected in the Summit declarations adopted in September.

Secondly, in maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council must better utilize its available tools to monitor trends in human trafficking in armed conflict, identify perpetrators and hold them accountable. Information and evidence of acts of trafficking in persons and sexual violence in conflict should be made available to the Council and channelled to the relevant sanctions committees, including the committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. We support integrating a focus on trafficking in persons and the use of sexual violence in armed conflict into the work of the 1267 Monitoring Team and Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, where there are clear linkages to terrorist activities.

At the same time, the crucial outreach and advocacy role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict must be better leveraged. The securing of commitments and action plans for parties to the conflict, so as to end and prevent violations and abuses associated with trafficking persons, including sexual violence and recruitment and use of children, should continue to be pursued. We call for the Council's continued engagement with those envoys, including through the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and the various sanctions committee.

My final point pertains to the need for victims and survivors of trafficking and sexual violence to be supported in returning to a secure and stable life. Women and children subjected to any violations and abuses, including trafficking and sexual violence at the hands of Da'esh and similar groups, should be considered as victims and given access to funding and assistance. In that respect, community and religious leaders are pivotal in ensuring the reintegration and rehabilitation of survivors and eliminating the stigma that can be associated with the ordeal that they have been through. In that regard, we support a continued partnership with civil society to enable survivors and communities to heal and renew.

I wish to conclude by reaffirming Malaysia's enduring resolve to combat and eradicate trafficking in persons, and of our equally strong commitment to continue working with the international community until we bring an end to those crimes against humanity.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): Let me begin by congratulating the President of the Government of Spain, Mr. Rajoy Brey, and the Spanish delegation for this most timely debate and for the successful adoption of resolution 2331 (2016) today.

Trafficking in persons, like slavery, with which it is closely associated, used to be regarded as a crime of an earlier era. Sadly, that is not so any more. Indeed, it

can be found in many countries, including my own, as I shall note more fully in a moment. It has reinforced to my own country that all States Members of the United Nations must be vigilant in addressing the issue. The problems and effects of trafficking are exponentially and despicably worse in conflict situations. That reality has been brought home through today's briefing — and, if I may say so quite graphically and directly — to the Council in the testimony of Nadia Murad, the young Yazidi woman who addressed us last year (see S/PV.7585), as well as in the briefings of Zainab Bangura, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Under-Secretary-General Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, on the use of sexual violence in the conflicts in Syria and South Sudan, the Lake Chad region and elsewhere.

The callous barbarity of the treatment meted out to innocent people, most often women, girls and young men, is mind-numbing: being kidnapped, forced into marriage, raped, sexually molested and abused; sold into slavery, forced into prostitution; forced to be a suicide bomber, a combatant, a labourer; and even sent into battle with your baby strapped to your back. And, if by some fortunate chance you are able to get free, there is the risk of being rejected by your own family and community for the crimes that were done to you. Listening to those briefings last year were the most harrowing days I have spent at this table.

The Secretary-General's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361/Rev.1) and the briefings on specific conflicts on the Council's agenda illustrate the ways in which trafficking is both fuelled by and exacerbates conflict situations. However, the evidence presented today on how such phenomena interplay and reinforce each other is deeply troubling. Terrorist groups will, of course, use whatever means they can to pursue their objectives. For some, their motive is profit. In many cases, however, it is about terrorizing and controlling communities to eliminate resistance and, above all, to exercise power over people with no defences. In that regard, those perpetrators are in essence cowards.

In any event, we need a shared understanding of that phenomenon and an agreement on collective action to confront and defeat it. The fact that the issue is difficult, deeply distasteful and has social and economic dimensions should not deter the Council from taking it up or be used as a pretext for leaving the issue for other bodies to address. The Council has a responsibility to engage in the full spectrum of international security issues, in all their disturbing dimensions.New Zealand would like to highlight five aspects that we consider warrant particular attention.

First, the Council needs to integrate such issues into our work, wherever relevant. That means ensuring that the effects of trafficking and sexual violence against women, men, and children are appropriately reflected in our consideration of specific mandates and country situations. That should not depend on mandate prescriptiveness. Rather, when present, such aspects need to be considered. To that end, the Secretariat needs to ensure that such issues are adequately reflected in its advice to the Council, including its formal reports and the conflict assessments on which they are based.

Secondly, we need to make active and effective use of the other international tools at our disposal. As Ms. Bangura so clearly pointed out today, the effective use of the Islamic State in the Levant/Da'esh sanctions regime is an obvious point of engagement. It was disappointing that we were unable to reach an agreement for her to brief us and our Committee earlier this year.

As resolution 2331 (2016) adopted today underlines, the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking provides an essential framework for such efforts, both in terms of international cooperation and State-level implementation. Within the Plan of Action, the terrorist financing framework has shown its effectiveness in following the flow of money to those responsible and cutting off sources of finance. Organizations such as the International Organization for Migration, INTERPOL, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units also have significant expertise and networks that we can and should be utilizing to their fullest extent.

As resolution 2223 (2016)adopted last week underlines, challenging cross-border issues such as this demand cohesion across lines of effort to be effective. It is important, therefore, that such international efforts are effectively coordinated. The United Nations system is well placed to assist. The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons has a central role to play, as does the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. We look forward to engaging with Member States on options for how such coordination can be further strengthened.

Thirdly, regional cooperation has a vital role to play in efforts to confront such issues, given their cross-border nature and scope. New Zealand's experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of such approaches. In our own region, the Asia Pacific, the Bali Process provides a valuable forum for addressing the complex challenges of trafficking in persons and related transnational crime.

Fourthly, States need to pursue those responsible for such acts at the domestic level. Traffickers profit from exploiting the weak and vulnerable. All States need to ensure that they have appropriate criminal offences that allow such individuals to be brought to justice. Just last week, a New Zealand court handed down the first conviction in New Zealand for people trafficking, imposing a sentence of almost 10 years in prison and ordering the payment of reparations to the victims.

Finally, we must not lose sight of the needs of those most affected by conflict-related trafficking and sexual violence — the victims and the survivors. In that regard, Nadia Murad laid down a very specific challenge to the Council today. To establish an effective mechanism to gather and protect evidence of the crimes that have been committed in Iraq and Syria. That is a challenge that New Zealand will not be able to take up as we leave the Council in 11 days, at least not in this organ, but we believe that it is a challenge that needs to be addressed.

In conclusion, we hope today's discussions will galvanize our collective efforts to combat and defeat those interrelated scourges by tackling them at their source, while bringing those responsible to justice and providing the necessary support to those affected.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China was deeply shocked by the fatal shooting of the Russian Ambassador to Turkey and by the terrorist incidents that have occurred in other countries, including Germany and Yemen. We offer our deepest condolences to the victims and strongly condemn those acts of terrorism. China takes a firm stand against all forms of terrorism and supports the international community's counter-terrorism efforts and actions.

China commends Spain's initiative to convene today's open debate. We welcome Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, President of the Government of Spain, who is presiding over today's meeting. I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Executive Director Fedotov, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura, and the representatives of civil society for their briefings.

Resolution 2331 (2016), unanimously adopted today by the Security Council, will help the international community combat trafficking in persons in conflict areas and protect the rights and interests of women and children in a joint endeavour. Today, we are witnessing the swift emergence of problems in regional hotspots, the start of new conflicts and the continuance of protracted ones, which all pose a serious threat to the survival and dignity of the people in conflict situations, in particular vulnerable groups such as women and children, making them easier prey to violence and crime. It is incumbent upon the international community to build synergies to enhance the protection of the rights of women and children in areas of armed conflict and strive to end the trafficking of persons in such areas.

First, we must eradicate the root causes of conflict. While fighting transnational organized crime with great intensity and providing safety assurances for women and children in conflict situations, the international community should pay close attention to addressing the root causes of conflict. It should intensify the political approach used based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in order to resolve differences through dialogue and consultation. We should focus on helping conflict torn countries boost their economic and social development, embark on sustainable development and steer clear of conflict and war.

Secondly, we must step up the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime. Trafficking in persons in areas of armed conflict has become the source of funding for terrorist organizations and transnational organized crime groups. The international community should take coordinated, harmonized action, apply uniform standards and employ political, economic and cultural means in an integrated manner in order to obstruct the channels of financing for terrorist organizations and firmly suppress all forms of terrorism and transnational, organized crime.

Thirdly, we should help conflict-torn countries to strengthen their capacity-building. They bear the primary responsibility for protecting the safety of their women and children and combating human trafficking. On the other hand, they are likely to be dealing with practical difficulties such as a lack of resources and capacity. While respecting national sovereignty,

the international community should provide these countries, at their request, with constructive support, focusing on assisting their capacity-building in the areas of the fight against terrorism and border control.

Fourthly, we should deepen international cooperation. The issue of human trafficking in conflict situations involves countries of origin, transit and destination. Those concerned should improve their cooperation in areas such as border enforcement, financial regulation and judicial assistance. The United Nations and its subsidiary bodies, including the Security Council, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, should all leverage their particular advantages, strengthen their coordination and work together to address the issue.

China will continue to strengthen its cooperation with Governments and the relevant international organizations in order to effectively protect the rights and interests of women and children, to combat human trafficking in conflict situations and to jointly safeguard international and regional peace, security, stability and development.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first like to express my deep appreciation to the President of the Government of Spain, the Secretary-General, the members of the Security Council, every Member of our Organization and the staff of the Secretariat, who have voiced their outrage and sympathy over the terrorist act that killed Ambassador Andrey Gennadievich Karlov of the Russian Federation. We greatly appreciate their solidarity.

The crime of human trafficking has been a dangerous element in a number of current conflicts, and its link to terrorism is particularly worrying. One of the most shocking examples of it has been the violence inflicted by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant on ethnic and religious minorities, including Yazidis. Terrorists have captured thousands of Yazidis, enslaved their women and children, forced them into marriage and abused them sexually. Yazidis and other minorities fleeing terrorist oppression and atrocities have been forced to abandon their homes, and many have been killed. Through, for instance, its resolutions 2195 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015), the Security Council has repeatedly called attention to the closely interlocking relationships between the various forms of transnational organized crime and terrorism. In December of last year, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/25) on the issue of combating human trafficking.

We have taken note of the efforts of the United Nations, including its Office on Drugs and Crime, to prevent and combat human trafficking, including by providing States with assistance through its agencies. That work deserves all possible support. Russia has traditionally supported consolidating the efforts of States, United Nations entities and international and regional anti-trafficking organizations. The Russian Federation is party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Palermo Protocol, and is a member of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking. We have supported the development of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons since its beginnings and taken an active part in it. The international community has established a number of mechanisms capable of helping to qualitatively improve States' cooperation in preventing and combating human trafficking.

The transnational groups involved in this criminal activity today are constantly adapting their methods and in many cases working with the terrorist underground, for which the proceeds from human trafficking are now a source of funding. This is often accompanied by kidnappings, sexual violence and drug trafficking. Partly for that reason, States have decided, during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, to conduct an assessment of the progress that has been made in implementing the Global Plan of Action. We hope that the review will enable us to update it in the light of the new challenges and threats that have emerged, including the issue of human trafficking in armed conflict. In that regard, we would like to emphasize that when considering this topic it is important to keep to the established purviews of United Nations entities. For instance, based on its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council should deal with the issue of human trafficking only as it relates to situations on its agenda. If not, such efforts might lead to the creation of parallel mechanisms that could end up having a negative impact on the effectiveness of international efforts in that area.

There are no universal recipes for combating human trafficking, and every State must decide its own policy and come up with the best possible measures at the national level. Technical assistance with capacity-

building in this area is particularly important for countries in situations of armed conflict. In that regard, one particularly topical issue is protecting the victims of human trafficking in armed conflict situations and assisting them with particular regard for their age and gender. That means providing social, psychological, economic and medical help, as well as access to justice.

The crimes committed by terrorist groups result in the most disgusting kinds of human trafficking. We would like to once again strongly condemn the barbarism of such radicals and affirm our solidarity with the victims of terror. We once again urge the international community to jettison its short-term geopolitical interests and unite firmly in the fight against terrorism under the coordination of the United Nations. That is the only way we can defeat terrorism in all its manifestations, including human trafficking.

We reject the insinuations in the Ukrainian delegation's statement as inappropriate, unfounded and in some places simply ridiculous.

Ms. Mendelson (United States of America): I would like to begin by expressing our condolences to the friends, family and colleagues of Andrey Karlov and all those affected by yesterday's attacks.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General, the President of the Government of Spain, Mr. Rajoy Brey, Executive Director Fedotov, Special Representative Bangura and, of course, Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan and Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha for their dedication to combating trafficking in persons in all its forms. We particularly appreciate Spain's leadership on the issue and its initiative in introducing today's historic resolution 2331 (2016).

A year ago, as many today have noted, the Council met for the first time in its 70-year history to discuss the issue of human trafficking in conflict (see S/PV.7585). Before that meeting, and again today, some argued that the subject did not belong in the Security Council and was not really a security issue. Yet those of us who were in the Chamber a year ago, and again today, will never forget Nadia Murad's testimony about Da'esh's institutionalization of slavery and sexual violence, and the nihilistic use of Yazidi women as "trafficked flesh" to recruit male fighters. It is an honour to know Nadia. Her testimony bears witness in a way that not only moves the human spirit but provides the sort of gripping, empirical account of how Da'esh functions that was heard at the Nuremberg trials. Her very being is a reminder of the resilience, bravery and strength that some, including her, are capable of.

Thanks to the tenacious efforts of civil society — non-governmental organizations, journalists, religious leaders and survivors — we have seen progress. Governments, the United Nations and other organizations have elevated attention both in the public consciousness and political discourse to the horrors of modern slavery and the duty we have to respond. A year on, I wish we could say that, thanks to advocacy and collective action, the exploitation of human beings in times of conflict has abated.

Unfortunately, that is not the case. In 2016, children were still lured by human traffickers from refugee camps, and young boys were forced to pick up guns and become soldiers. In Da'esh-held territory, the depravity of sexual slavery has continued to shock. Thanks to the courageous work of Special Representative Bangura and her staff, the United Nations has incontrovertible proof that young women are bought, sold and horrifically abused on a daily basis. The United States appreciates the initiative of the United Kingdom in the pursuit of justice for Da'esh's victims, and is working with it and Iraq to explore the best ways to hold Da'esh accountable, including gathering and preserving evidence of its crimes.

Although much recent attention has focused on human trafficking in situations of conflict in the Middle East we know that trafficking in conflict zones is not a new phenomenon and that researchers and activists, myself included, have documented it in many conflict and post-conflict situations, from Bosnia and Kosovo to Nigeria and Afghanistan. Yet despite increased attention and outrage, we still face critical gaps in our understanding of human trafficking in the context of conflict and post-conflict situations. Where we know that trafficking is taking place, our ability to stop the abuse, hold traffickers to account and deliver assistance to the victims is often non-existent or woefully inadequate.

That is why the resolution that the Council adopted today is so important. By articulating the nexus between conflict, sexual violence and trafficking in persons, we can take practical action. Together, we can get Governments, civil society and the United Nations system to begin to systematically monitor for signs of trafficking in conflict, to train relevant humanitarian personnel and all peacekeeping personnel in how to

recognize and respond to victims, to analyse financial flows — follow the money — in order to identify where terrorist and armed groups are profiting from the proceeds of human trafficking, and to share information on and to seek justice for those crimes.

While it is critical to close the information gap — let me note that too few people know and understand this issue, including too few inside ministries of defence — knowledge is but one critical aspect. The resolution also calls on all members to criminalize and vigorously prosecute the individuals and groups that facilitate and profit from human trafficking. It encourages the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, to brief sanctions committees on identified trafficking patterns and perpetrators. It provides arms committees with a mandate to sanction perpetrators, as part of established sanctions regimes.

Within the context of emergency humanitarian operations, resolution 2331 (2016) underscores the importance of humanitarian actors identifying and providing services to trafficking victims during and after humanitarian crises. Those services must be resourced by Member States and, again, the humanitarians must be trained to identify possible victims.

Finally, the resolution recognizes that individuals who are subjected to sexual violence and human trafficking at the hands of terrorist groups are also victims of terrorism and should be provided with the same restorative services and support available to other such victims. Since 2000 and the adoption of its Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the United States has been a leader on this issue. The United States is proud to support resolution 2331 (2016). Consistent with our dedication to ending trafficking in persons in all its forms, we look forward to strengthening international cooperation in combating trafficking.

Mr. Martins (Angola): Let me too join other colleagues in presenting our most heartfelt condolences to the Russian Federation for the terrible act that ended the life of the Russian Ambassador to Turkey.

Let me welcome and thank the President of the Government of Spain, His Excellency Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, for presiding over this very important debate, and the Spanish delegation for selecting this critical issue of contemporary life as a central theme in the programme of work of its presidency in the month of December.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura; the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yury Fedotov; and our two briefers and activists for Yazidi women's rights, Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan and Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, for their poignant testimonies on an issue in which the Council sometimes needs to hear directly from the people involved in order to more clearly seize the importance of taking measures on time and measures that take action and count in combating such practices.

Trafficking in human beings is clearly a gross violation of human rights and an infringement on the dignity and integrity of human beings. This type of crime is on the increase, having become a large source of income for organized crime worldwide, in parallel with drugs and arms trafficking. The basic approach to countering the phenomenon involves the commitment of countries and the international community to improving the socioeconomic conditions of the most vulnerable and guaranteeing the fundamental rights of all of their citizens. A collective effort is crucial in order to upgrade the fight against trafficking in persons by gathering the support of all nations, communities, institutions and individuals as an essential prerequisite to successfully addressing the problem.

Trafficking in human beings in conflict situations leads to sexual slavery, to the trade in women and girls, to forced marriage and to the most appalling human rights violations. Those tactics are used by terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in Syria, the Lord's Resistance Army and other armed and terrorist groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Modern slavery is one of the most significant human rights tragedy of modern times, with multiplying effects in conflict situations, particularly in Africa and in the Middle East.

The Security Council, as we are doing today through this debate and the adoption of resolution 2331 (2016), decided to continue sending a strong message concerning that egregious violation of human rights, by qualifying the trafficking and the issue of enslavement as war crimes and crimes against humanity and broadening the jurisdiction covering that type of

time. In addition, the United Nations system has been mobilizing and coordinating efforts to combat modern day slavery in conflict situations.

Trafficking in persons takes place in countries and regions of Africa and the Middle East, Latin America and the Far East, with people being recruited for a life of exploitation and slavery in Europe, the United States of America and elsewhere. Moreover, criminal networks recruit desperate people, including children, in search of a better life, thereby raising the imperative need to consider the phenomenon as an issue related to international peace and security, as expressed in the fourth preambular paragraph of the statement by the President of the Security Council, adopted 16 December 2015, which notes that

> "trafficking in persons undermines the rule of law and contributes to other forms of transnational organized crime, which can exacerbate conflict and foster insecurity" (*S/PRST/2015/25*).

Responding to increased awareness of the phenomenon, Angola has adopted legislation related to criminalizing trafficking in human beings by developing specific mechanisms to prevent and combat that type of crime. The aim is to step up the fight against trafficking and ensure assistance, recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration for victims. In addition, justice reform, executive programmes and legislative measures have been adopted to support victims. Legislation has been updated, including the adoption of new penal code provisions to respond to Angola's current problems in this area.

Effective partnerships among agencies responsible for preventing and combating this scourge are being put into place, while the Minister for Social Reinsertion has created shelters throughout the country for the victims of human trafficking. Angola has acceded to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Additional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, as well as other relevant international conventions and instruments related to the eradication of child and forced labour and to slavery.

In conclusion, further work is needed in all of our countries. Without a comprehensive regime to combat the trafficking in persons and protection of victims, we need to build on the experience of others who have made the most progress. To this end, Governments must deploy efforts to prevent, punish and eradicate trafficking in persons as well as to ensure the physical safety of victims, while ensuring that legal systems contain provisions that address the needs and give due compensation of the victims.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to express my heartfelt condolences to the delegation of the Russian Federation for the horrific terrorist act that claimed the life of the Russian ambassador in Ankara.

I would like to congratulate the Spanish delegation on its capable presidency of the Security Council this month, during which it has made valuable contributions to the work of the Council, the latest of which is resolution 2331 (2016), adopted today, on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the briefers on their strong and poignant statements this morning.

Human trafficking is a form of contemporary slavery and constitutes a grave violation of human rights. Countering human trafficking is one of the priorities of the Egyptian Government, owing to the challenges posed by Egypt's strategic location as a transit State. These challenges have been exacerbated by the armed conflicts that are taking place in the region and which constitute a environment conducive to human trafficking and exploitation, especially by terrorist groups. The situation is further exacerbated by the fact that Egypt is one of the countries of the region to receive the largest number of refugees. Egypt was therefore one of the first countries to endorse the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Palermo Protocol, in 2004. Egypt has also acceded to an initiative for the establishment of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking.

At the national level, Egypt has established an institutional and legal framework that serves as a mainstay for the country's undertaking of its international obligations. In 2007, Egypt established a national coordinating committee for preventing and countering human trafficking, enacted in 2010 a law designed to counter human trafficking, and this year launched its national strategy to this end.

At the regional level, Egypt hosted in Sharm El-Sheikh the second African Union Regional Conference on Human Trafficking and Smuggling in the Horn of Africa and joined the Arab Guiding Law on Human Trafficking. We would like to commend the constructive cooperation between Egypt and the United

Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with regard to capacity-building in relation to preventing and countering of human trafficking.

The adoption by the Security Council today of a resolution on human trafficking in conflict situations is a landmark in the history of the Security Council. We would like to shed light on the following points.

First of all, the resolution should be limited to trafficking in persons related to conflicts, since the issue of human trafficking falls within the purview of the General Assembly.

Second, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Palermo Protocol should serve as the basis for the implementation of the commitments set forth in the resolution, including the definition of human trafficking and its key element of exploitation.

Third, the international community should redouble its efforts to shut down all sources of financing for terrorist groups, including human trafficking, and use all international mechanisms available.

Fourth, we have to distinguish between the crime of sexual exploitation, which is one of the objectives of human trafficking, and sexual violence.

Fifth, human trafficking crimes, especially in women and girls, are not associated with any religion, nationality or civilization. We have to shed light on the important role that could be played by men of religion and traditional leaders.

Sixth, we must abide by the provisions of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 and its Additional Protocol, which is the governing framework for implementing the provisions of the resolution that has been adopted today.

Seventh, UNODC has pivotal role to play in the General Assembly when it comes to human trafficking, given the experience it has accumulated in this area. In the meantime, it is very important to provide it with the financial resources it needs to fulfil its mandate. In addition, we underline the important role played by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in preventing and fighting human trafficking as well as by the International Organization for Migration.

Eighth, we underscore the important role that should be played by the United Nations and the private sector to break the link between procurement and the consumption of human trafficking.

Egypt reiterates its full support for the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons which is considered to be the governing framework for international cooperation in countering human trafficking. Egypt is providing all forms of support for the success of the second review of the plan that will be undertaken next year.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I join others on this solemn occasion to convey Senegal's sincere condolences to the Russian Federation following the assassination of its Ambassador in Turkey. This is also an appropriate opportunity for my delegation to reaffirm Senegal's firm condemnation of all forms of terrorism whatever their origin.

The Senegalese delegation welcomes the presence among us this morning of His Excellency Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, who is presiding over today's open debate, which his country has decided to devote to an important subject, namely, trafficking in persons in conflict situations. The choice of this essential topic, as well as the unanimous adoption of resolution 2231 (2016) this morning, are undoubtedly further illustrations of the outstanding work carried out over the past two years by the Spanish delegation under the leadership of Ambassador Roman Oyarzun Marchesi, whom we congratulate, together with the entire Spanish delegation.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and the other briefers this morning for the quality of their statements, which have increased our understanding of the magnitude and gravity of a scourge that shocks the conscience of everyone.

Multiple conflicts in various parts of the world are exacerbating emigration and are even forcing the displacement of populations compelled to flee their homes, exposing them to numerous threats and making them increasingly vulnerable, including to trafficking in persons organized by criminal networks, terrorist groups or armed gangs. The link between migration and human trafficking during conflict was highlighted in the 2016 report of the UNODC on the subject, which states that 60 per cent of victims of trafficking during armed conflict are refugees and asylum-seekers who have fled conflicts in their countries and are simply seeking better prospects.

Unfortunately, instead of realizing their dreams, many of these migrants are abducted and sold or held captive. The phenomenon becomes an even greater source of concern because these people are often subjected to forced marriage or even sexual slavery, for women and girls, or to forced labour, for men and boys, including in the mining sector, if they have not already become slaves or combatants.

I should like to echo the words of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, who said that trafficking in human beings is an umbrella term that comprises a range of barbaric practices, one more inhuman than the next. The phenomenon is of even greater concern when the perpetrators are extremist or non-State armed terrorist groups who are using the tactic to sow terror or as a strategy of war, with the aim of consolidating their ideology or power; strengthening their financial flows; changing the composition of a community; or humiliating a given ethnic or religious group.

Even more unacceptable are the various forms of sexual violence and exploitation, particularly when they are linked to trafficking in persons in the context of armed conflict. This is a centuries-old phenomenon that unfortunately continues, as we have seen with respect to the fates of the Chibok schoolgirls, abducted by Boko Haram in Nigeria in 2014, and of the Yazidi women and the women sold at the Raqqa market by Da'esh. In addition, such trafficking is facilitated through social networks.

Senegal reiterates its firm condemnation of all forms of sexual violence and exploitation. It believes that in the fight against this scourge, due attention must be given to the rehabilitation of victims and of the affected communities. We must wage a resolute fight against human trafficking during armed conflict, which not only constitutes a grave violation of human rights and international humanitarian law but also contributes to instability and to promoting terrorism.

Resolution 2331 (2016), which we have adopted today and of which Senegal was a sponsor, is surely a step in the right direction. The resolution calls on States to implement the provisions of resolution 2195 (2014), on the link between terrorism and transnational organized crime. It is also key to implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

We also call for a recasting of the global debate on the financing of violent extremism. We must combat this scourge in order to address fresh challenges and the economic and strategic underpinnings of trafficking in human beings, in particular women and children, in armed conflict.

Allow me to note here that Senegal has ratified virtually all international and regional instruments on migration and human trafficking. Furthermore, my country has a number of legislative and regulatory texts that address migration and human-trafficking issues, including a specific law pertaining to human trafficking and related practices and victim protection, which was adopted in 2005 and which supplements our criminal code. This law criminalizes trafficking in persons and related practices by highlighting the various forms of exploitation of vulnerable persons to which it leads and its transnational organized character. It also criminalizes organized illegal migration and trafficking in visas or other travel or identification documents.

In order to better ensure the effective suppression of trafficking in persons and migrant trafficking, chapter III of the 2005 law confers two types of jurisdiction on Senegalese courts: universal jurisdiction, through article 10, and passive personality jurisdiction, through article 11. This legal arsenal is further reinforced by a number of frameworks that have been set up to address problems related to migrant trafficking and flows. For example, we have a centre that offers guidance to children in difficult situations, known as GINDI; an intersectoral committee to fight child labour; a directorate of correctional education and social protection; and a national unit to fight trafficking in persons, among others.

In terms of migration, Senegal's strategy is based primarily on a number of partnership agreements with countries of destination or transit for Senegalese migrants. Senegal and France signed such an agreement in September 2006 to jointly manage migratory flows between the two countries, and we also signed a memorandum with Spain on 9 November 2007. Senegal has devised an integrated national migration strategy, which has already shown some technical success, so as to more effectively address this phenomenon.

We wish to reiterate the importance of prevention, protection, reintegration and accountability in our tools to fight all of the problems facing humankind. Cooperation with traditional and religious leaders can play a significant role in setting up a communications strategy to deconstruct and counter the terrorist narrative.

Finally, I should like to recall that parties to conflict bear the responsibility, with the support of the international community, to put an end to sexual violence in armed conflict, through a number of efforts, including in the areas of prevention, assistance and protection. Beyond that, we must also deter, detect and put an end to human trafficking, particularly by violent extremist groups, as highlighted in the presidential statement on trafficking in persons adopted in December 2015 (S/PRST/2015/25).

Human trafficking during armed conflict poses a threat to stability, peacekeeping and national reconstruction. We must therefore work together to put an end to these heinous practices, which will be possible only if we all make a commitment to that end.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to remind speakers that they should limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. The presidency will use the flashing lights on the collars of their microphones to prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts thereof in writing or to upload them to PaperSmart and deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): While the General Assembly has exhaustively addressed human trafficking, we commend the Security Council for its efforts to delve into the subject. It is one of the most shocking challenges facing the international community and one that affects all regions of the world, without exception, since every country is, or could become, the origin, transit or destination country for victims of this threat. We must emphatically condemn the fact that, in armed conflict, refugees, displaced persons and immigrants — particularly women and girls — are consistently extremely vulnerable to human trafficking, in addition to frequently being victims of abduction, sexual violence and abuse.

The 2016 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, reflects the dismal overall picture of human trafficking, which continues to claim many victims every day. The findings of that report must form the basis of our strategies, programmes and plans for preventing and combating this scourge. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, enables international legal cooperation and bolsters common efforts to prevent, punish and investigate this offence.

Similarly, full compliance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development constitutes another essential tool to attack the structural factors that contribute to trafficking, such as extreme poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and the lack of opportunities. Pursuant to Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda, we must put a stop to illicit financial flows and prevent organized crime and terrorist groups from enriching themselves. We can no longer allow the trafficking of women and girls to finance criminal activity.

Finally, we must strengthen the multilateral framework with national strategies and concrete measures, with an emphasis on protecting and assisting victims. For that purpose, my country has taken three steps. First, we have undertaken legal and institutional reforms to better address human trafficking in an effort to identify, investigate and punish its perpetrators and prevent the commission of this crime. In the past seven years, 733 people were sentenced in Mexico. Secondly, we have set up and have put in motion a national commission on human trafficking to benefit from the joint efforts of Government authorities, civil society and the academic sector. Thirdly, we have implemented a national detection instrument, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in order to be able to benefit from timely and reliable information on the trend in Mexico. We currently benefit from the technical assistance of UNODC in a national campaign to combat this crime among vulnerable groups.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I offer my condolences and those of my Government to the people of Germany, Turkey and Russia for yesterday's terrorist attacks. There is no justification for terrorism.

This debate and resolution 2331 (2016), adopted this morning, as Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha reminded us in her moving briefing, takes place 12 months after the Security Council's first debate on this item (see S/PV.7585), convened by the United States. The holding of this meeting reflects the importance that the

international community attaches to the issue, but it also lays bare the tremendous challenges we still face. As obvious as it may sound, human trafficking is a crime, tragic and brutal in its disproportionate effects on the most vulnerable: women and girls, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons. If any conclusion can be reached today, it is that, as the Secretary-General said, prevention must be one of our priorities.

Preventive strategies, such as actions to prevent terrorism and violent extremism, cannot be developed in isolation. We are facing a phenomenon that requires joint, collaborative responses based on international cooperation, with full respect for human rights and in the framework of agreements on the protection of civilians, and must be supported by civil society.

With a long internal conflict like ours, we in Colombia have understood that women and girls play a fundamental and proactive role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as in building stable and lasting peace. That is why we must ensure their rights in a safe and supportive environment. In the peace agreement that is starting to be implemented, with the support of the Security Council, guaranteeing the rights of women and girls has become a common purpose in the work of all the institutions that have been collaborating and incorporating a gender perspective into their various programmes. Legislation, particularly law No. 1719 of 2014, condemns and specifically addresses the crime of human trafficking committed during armed conflict.

In 2016, the Secretary-General, in his report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361), underscored that, of all peace processes referred to in the report, only Colombia has systematically addressed gender issues, pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000) and resolution 1820 (2008). That is especially true regarding reparations for suffering, particularly providing for compensation and restitution, but also with regard to ensuring non-recidivism and to preventive measures, notably by creating and promoting a culture free of all forms of violence and discrimination, in keeping with international obligations.

Colombia is facing an enormous challenge, but it will continue to make strides towards our common purpose.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Braun (Germany): At the outset, allow me to express my thanks to His Excellency the President of the Government of Spain, in his capacity of President of the Security Council, for his expression of condolences following yesterday's terrorist attack in the German capital, Berlin. I would also like to thank the members of the Council for their statements today of solidarity with my country. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all other Member States and colleagues who have sent messages of sympathy and solidarity, which are much appreciated.

On the topic of this meeting, while aligning myself with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union, I would like to thank Spain for initiating this debate, and the briefers for their input and their substantive reports.

Germany co-sponsored resolution 2331 (2016), just adopted. I would like to underscore three aspects in particular

First, armed conflict often enables or aggravates the crime of human trafficking through the breakdown of law and order, weakened or non-existing Government structures and incresing levels of violence, for example. Human trafficking can constitute a war crime and is often connected to sexual violence as a method of warfare against civilians. Displaced persons are particularly vulnerable and prone to becoming the prey of criminals specializing in human trafficking for labour or sexual exploitation. It is a shame that civilian populations are viewed by some armed groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, as a resource or commodity to be trafficked, thereby lining their pockets and ultimately prolonging conflicts. Going after the proceeds of human trafficking will lead us to those commissioning these crimes. We therefore welcome that the Monitoring Team is mandated to investigate the cross-cutting issue of human trafficking in its threat assessments.

Secondly, I would like to underscore the importance of one of the questions that you, Mr. President, have raised in the concept note (S/2016/1031, annex) for this debate, namely, the risk of procurement and supply chains contributing to trafficking in persons. Much of what we all consume every day has come a long way and has gone through many hands. All of us have a responsibility to make sure that what we enjoy is not the end product of the abuse of slave labour and victims of human trafficking. Germany has placed this issue at the

top of the agenda of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) during its chairmanship in 2016, hosting a conference in Berlin on the issue in September. In close collaboration with the OSCE's coordinator, we strengthen the role of the OSCE as mediator and pioneer for an internationally coordinated approach against human trafficking.

Thirdly, people falling prey to human trafficking in conflict are already among the most vulnerable in their societies. Those who reach a safe destination often have lost all their belongings. Their bodies and souls have endured unspeakable horrors. Minors lose their parents and are in particular need of responsible care. The risks of vulnerable persons becoming victims of traffickers can be reduced by establishing legal and safe routes. Resettlement and relocation programmes are a good means to achieve that. Germany's programme for Yazidi refugees from Iraq, for example, has reached a 1,000 victims of the terrorism of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The victims and their families have found a safe refuge in Germany.

The group's most recognized face and their loudest voice is Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking and winner of the Sakharov Prize of the European Parliament. I am glad to see that Ms. Taha is present in the Chamber. She speaks out against the horrors the people who endured and calls for the dignified treatment to which every victim of human trafficking is entitled. Let us not forget: every bit of help for the victims is also one step ahead in the long struggle against human trafficking.

Let us spare no national or international effort to drain the swamp of human trafficking, both in conflict situations and beyond. Let us step up efforts to address conflict and instability as key push factors for human trafficking and migration. Human trafficking is an abuse of the human rights of the victims. Let us be mindful of the victims' human rights at every stage of their horrific journeys.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to express my appreciation to Spain for organizing this debate. Its convening, which coincides with the official launch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, should be viewed as an important message by the United Nations and its States Member that trafficking in persons will not be tolerated under any circumstances and should be decisively dealt with. Today's debate can enrich the General Assembly's high-level meeting planned for October 2017 to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. We also underline the leading role of the General Assembly in considering this subject.

Given the transborder nature of the crime of trafficking, coordination and cooperation at the international level are necessary for combating it. The international community has to further strengthen and impose effective measures to prevent, combat and eliminate all forms of trafficking in persons. To that end, demand for trafficking victims should be addressed and suppressed, and protection for victims should be ensured, particularly for women and children, who are mostly subject to forced labour, exploitation, violence and sexual abuse.

In combating trafficking in persons, one cannot overlook the root causes of the phenomenon — poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment, lack of socioeconomic opportunities and lack of security, especially in conflict situations, as well as instability caused by different internal and external factors, including foreign occupation, foreign intervention and regime-change policies. All those elements continue to make people victims of human trafficking. With regard to today's debate, an increasing number of armed conflicts and the resulting mass movements of people have caused an alarming situation.

The indecisiveness of the world community in fighting terrorists such as Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front in Iraq and Syria or Boko Haram in Africa, due to narrowly defined geopolitical gains, has proved to be destructive in the global fight against trafficking in persons. The abhorrent reports of sexual enslavement of innocent women and girls and other atrocities committed by those criminals are the tragedies of our age and of the twenty-first century. Those Governments and individuals that are supporting those criminals financially, logistically or ideologically should be held accountable and brought to justice.

In that regard, takfiri ideologies that justify such abhorrent acts are to be blamed first, as they provide

the necessary mental grounds. The sad trafficking of women and girls in the Middle East and Africa by terrorist groups could only have happened within such horrendous mindsets. Such criminality begins in the minds of men, and it is in the minds of men that we can fight them.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, at the crossroads of drug trafficking, has first-hand experiences on the deadly nexus that could be forged between human trafficking networks and other criminal activities, including money-laundering, prostitution, slavery and drug trafficking. It is therefore essential that the international community constantly bear in mind the existence of links between different forms of criminal activities and trafficking in persons. We prefer to address them in an integrated manner.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to begin by thanking Spain for organizing this open debate and by thanking Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict for their briefings.

(*spoke in English*)

We would also like to offer our deepest condolences to the Russian Federation following the assassination of Ambassador Andrey Karlov in Ankara yesterday. Brazil strongly condemns all acts of terrorism, regardless of their motivation.

Human trafficking is among the most despicable crimes known to humankind, as it affects the most vulnerable, such as migrants and internally displaced persons, especially women and girls. When committed in conflict situations, human trafficking might even amount to a war crime. Brazil is particularly appalled by the incidents of human trafficking committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Boko Haram and other terrorist organizations, which are frequently associated with sexual enslavement.

Trafficked persons are treated as objects, not as human beings. They are often subject to organ harvesting, sexual exploitation, domestic service and forced marriages. Brazil supports efforts aimed at recovering the dignity of the victims of this heinous crime and ensuring that they have access to justice.In that regard, we welcome the appointment of Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha as Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking. By courageously speaking out and fighting for those who have endured these unlawful and degrading actions, she serves as an example for other victims and inspiration for us all.

The international community can do much more to combat this scourge. Closer cooperation among States and international agencies can help rescue victims and bring traffickers to justice. We must redouble our efforts to fulfil the Sustainable Developments Goals pertaining to the issue. We must equally acknowledge that long-term solutions can arise only from multilateral approaches to peace and security that set dialogue and mediation as priorities and place vulnerable populations at the centre of concern. Insufficient regard and resources for sustaining peace in crisis or post-conflict situations, as well as an ill-conceived bias for military solutions, help fuel rather than mitigate the instability behind the current movements of refugees and migrants.

Although human trafficking occurs in scenarios plagued by armed conflict, there are no intrinsic or automatic linkages between those two phenomena. As stated in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/949), obviously the interrelationship between them may arise under specific circumstances, but it should in no way be deemed universal. It is important to acknowledge that human trafficking is also regrettably taking place in situations that do not constitute a threat to international peace and security, such as situations of displacement following natural disasters. The remedies to overcome this scourge outside the context of conflict situations might be different from those to be applied in armed conflicts.

For the United Nations to effectively address human trafficking in all its forms, the Security Council should be mindful of the mandate and technical expertise of the General Assembly and of the Human Rights Council, as well as of the crucial role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in this realm.

In any case, the international community should exercise the utmost caution not to confuse the criminalization of trafficking in persons with the criminalization of migration itself. Our actions should aim at protecting the rights of, and providing assistance to, those people who are forced to leave their homes and

fall prey to human traffickers, so as not to victimize them yet again. In that context, Brazil wishes to recall a fundamental assertion made by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism in his most recent report, to the effect that

> "push-back operations, criminalized irregular migration and abandoned pledges to accept refugees ... contribute to the establishment of chaotic and covert movements of people, including through trafficking, which might ultimately assist those intent on committing acts of terrorism." (*A/71/384, para. 11*)

The international community has a responsibility to act to find a solution to the refugee crisis. It is incoherent to defend the responsibility to protect and the protection of civilians all the while turning our backs on those fleeing conflict and persecution. Brazil also reiterates that the criminalization of irregular migration is unacceptable, since it ultimately fuels human trafficking and disrespect for the fundamental rights of migrants. As my country's experience in granting humanitarian visas for Haitians since 2012 has shown, one of the most effective means of dismanting criminal human trafficking networks is by providing regular and safe ways of entry for those forced to move.

Let us all work together towards ensuring that human trafficking can be brought to a definitive end and that its victims can resume their lives with dignity and, most of all, hope.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Ms. Myria Vassiliadou, Anti-Trafficking Coordinator of the European Union.

Ms. Vassiliadou: I thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon; the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mr. Yury Fedotov; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura; the civilian activist for Yazidi women's rights, Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan; and the Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking, Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, for their briefings.

I speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We would like to congratulate Spain on convening this open ministerial debate, as well as to commend its keen commitment to addressing trafficking in human beings in conflict throughout its mandate as a member of the Security Council. This may mark the end of Spain's term, but it also marks a beginning in this area. We must build on the momentum.

Trafficking in human beings is a threat to human and national security, peace, human rights, democratic governance, the rule of law and socioeconomic development. Trafficking in human beings is a grave violation of human dignity, specifically prohibited under article 5 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. It is also a form of serious transnational organized crime, with huge human social and economic costs. It is driven by the demand for all forms of exploitation and by very high profits, in both legal and illegal economies, resulting in a complex interplay between supply and demand that must be addressed if the crime is to be eradicated.

We remain strongly committed to eradicating trafficking in human beings, which requires a transnational response. The United Nations provides an excellent forum for that. The European Union has placed multilateralism at the core of its new Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy. We stand behind the commitments in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants to combat human trafficking.

We welcome the reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361and S/2016/361/Rev.1) and on the implementation of measures to counter trafficking in persons (S/2016/949). We especially note the nexus between conflict- and post-conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking. In that context, trafficking takes many despicable forms, from sexual slavery to labour exploitation or organ removal. The list is long and gruesome. We are concerned by the references to armed groups that regard the civilian population as a resource to be exploited, viewing women's sexuality and fertility as commodities to be trafficked and traded as part of the political economy of war.

Importantly, trafficking is gender-specific. The most recent EU data show that trafficking for

the purpose of sexual exploitation is still the most widespread form and that the majority of its victims are women and girls. In that respect, we call for a more gender-specific, targeted approach in all actions against trafficking.

It is clear that we must focus on the prevention of trafficking in human beings in all its forms. Any other approach will come too late for the victims, as we have heard today. In that connection, ensuring accountability for the perpetrators is essential. We cannot accept a culture of impunity. By cracking down on the profits generated, we can strike a decisive blow. In order to do so, we must follow the financial trails and use all available investigative tools to prosecute the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

By upholding and promoting international standards, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and other international legal instruments, we contribute to ensuring strong foundations for the rule of law. We are working closely with UNODC in that respect via joint programmes. One such action is the joint European Union-UNODC Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants, launched in January in partnership with the International Organization for Migration and UNICEF, as mentioned in the report (S/2016/949) of the Secretary-General.

We remain committed to the implementation of the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, as defined in the Secretary-General's Bulletin (ST/SGB/2003/13) on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

While recognizing that we are faced with human displacement on the largest scale in human history, we acknowledge that the issue of human mobility goes beyond any one crisis. We live in a world of 7 billion people, with demographic imbalances and growing inequalities.

The European Union is honouring its responsibilities. Since 2015, our vessels have saved thousands of people in the Mediterranean Sea. Thanks to a mandate from the Security Council, Operation Sophia is disrupting traffickers' and smugglers' networks.

It is well known that Da'esh uses sexual violence systematically to fund its operations. That includes kidnapping for ransom and the sale of women and girls through human trafficking and slave markets. We recognize that instability creates an ideal environment for the criminal activities of traffickers. We are therefore actively supporting all efforts led by the United Nations to bring an end to the political and security crises in Syria and Libya. We need to strengthen our comprehensive policies and strategies aimed at empowering the role of women in society, and better understand their specific needs and their role in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. Measures need to be taken in order to prevent and address the use of new technologies as tools for recruiting victims of trafficking, including in conflict areas and by terrorist groups.

We emphasize the significant advancement in international justice made by the International Criminal Court, as well as by non-permanent international criminal tribunals, in combating sexual violence in conflict. Nevertheless, we bear in mind that the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court is complementary to the jurisdiction of States and that the primary responsibility for bringing perpetrators to justice resides with States. At the national level, accountability and transitional justice mechanisms are also key.

The EU has built an ambitious, gender-specific and comprehensive legal and policy framework to combat trafficking in human beings. Anti-trafficking actions also form a key part of our external policies and funding. The EU will continue to develop partnerships to address trafficking in human beings.

There is a market for trafficked human merchandise. We need to put an end to traffickers' impunity. Effectively preventing this heinous crime necessitates reducing the demand and incentives for the trafficking of human beings. Accountability and collective efforts are needed to put an end to this terrible crime.

A full version of my statement has been submitted to the Secretariat.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Ms. Bogyay (Hungary): At the outset, I convey condolences on behalf of my country and myself to the families of the victims of the recent horrible terrorist attacks and the assassination.

I thank Spain for convening this very important Security Council open debate. Trafficking in persons in conflict situations is still a new matter for the Council. We would also like to congratulate Spain for initiating the adoption of today's historic resolution 2331 (2016), on this extremely important topic. Hungary was happy to co-sponsor the resolution.

We are deeply troubled that trafficking in persons — often but not only for sexual purposes — has become a recurring feature and by-product of armed conflicts. In conflict and post-conflict situations, the level of insecurity, as well as the breakdown in family and community structures and other safety nets, increases the exposure of women, men, girls and boys to diverse forms of human exploitation. In order to fight trafficking in persons in situations of conflict more effectively, Hungary proposes the following.

First, the United Nations and its States Members need to play a more active, leading role in the fight against human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery. We encourage the incoming Secretary-General to place the fight against this global threat, which affects tens of millions of people, at the top of his agenda.

Second, it is essential to ratify and effectively implement the relevant international instruments, such as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930.

Third, strong prevention and protection efforts are urgently required in order to ensure that those impacted by conflict situations do not become vulnerable to traffickers.

Fourth, accountability for trafficking in persons in conflict is essential. While in specific circumstances the International Criminal Court and other international accountability mechanisms could, and should, play an important role, we must not forget that the primary responsibility for bringing those responsible to justice lies with States.

Fifth, Hungary supports the inclusion of perpetrators of trafficking in persons in United Nations and unilateral sanctions.

Sixth, Hungary is also of the view that coordination and cooperation among all relevant United Nations entities — including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Labour Organization, UNICEF and UN-Women — will also need to be improved. The new Secretary-General will need to play a key role in that regard.

Seventh, we need more, and more reliable, data on the subject. In that regard, Hungary welcomes the launch of the 2016 UNODC *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*.

I would like to thank the briefers for their accounts, because they were so important and moving to all of us: the Secretary-General; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of UNODC; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Zainab Bangura; and the two very important activists who have brought this matter to life for the Council. Hungary is ready to participate actively in discussions and activities to strengthen the response of the United Nations to this global threat.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and wishes to add the following remarks in its national capacity, which are also supported by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in the light of our cooperation related to the upcoming split mandate on the Security Council for 2017-2018.

More than 350,000 people crossed the Mediterranean Sea in 2016; nearly 5,000 died or disappeared in the crossing. Italy remains committed to saving lives at sea and has rescued more than 350,000 people since 2014, while actively working to disrupt the business model of traffickers. Italy has provided the bulk of the vessels for the European Union's Operation Sophia.

Human trafficking, particularly in conflict situations, targets the most vulnerable, including women and children, who often belong to religious minorities. It must be addressed through a comprehensive approach at the national, regional and international levels.

At the national level, Italy is focused on prevention, victim protection, anti-discrimination measures, strengthened law enforcement and judicial cooperation. Our legal framework is victim-centred, human-rights oriented and gender- and child-sensitive. In February, we approved a national action plan on combating trafficking in human beings.

At the international level, Italy promotes a holistic approach that focuses on addressing the root causes, finding political solutions to international crises, promoting international cooperation and devising accountability measures.

Accountability is fundamental. Italy is committed to bringing to justice individuals proved guilty of such crimes. Thanks to victims' identifications and the testimonies of survivors, a week ago Italian authorities convicted the culprits responsible for a shipwreck off the coast of Libya in April 2015, which caused more than 700 deaths. The perpetrators were sentenced to 18 years in prison.

Italy is also committed to the full implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, signed in Palermo, and its Protocols, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which are key to bolstering international cooperation. We urge their universal ratification and implementation.

Italy welcomes the greater involvement on the part of the Security Council in this topic. The trends reported by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2016/949) and the reports of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Organization for Migration and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons all highlight the security implications of the issue. We believe that the time is right to step up the Security Council's engagement in the following directions.

First, Italy will follow up on the Spanish initiative to keep the Security Council alert as to the link between human trafficking and violations of human rights. We will encourage efforts by the Council to condemn the exploitation of women and children, and we will support its ability to look into the connections with transnational organized crime and terrorism.

Secondly, we look forward to the Secretary-General's recommendations on strengthening synergies among United Nations agencies and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. As foreseen in resolution 2331 (2016), which was adopted today and which we co-sponsored, we believe that the Security Council should take advantage of the opportunity for the two Special Representatives to brief the sanctions committees about trafficking and abuses committed against women and children.

Thirdly, we underscore the importance of training for United Nations personnel in conflict situations. Peacekeepers and police units must be trained to rapidly identify situations where there is a heightened risk of trafficking, especially that involving the most vulnerable individuals. In that regard, I underscore our expertise in holding training courses for police units, with a focus on the protection of human rights and gender-based violence. So far, we have trained more than 10,000 units at the Centre of Excellence for Stability Forces Units in Vicenza.

Lastly, with regard to financial flows from trafficking, existing mechanisms to curb money-laundering and terrorism financing can play an important role in monitoring migration routes and in pre-empting trafficking, from the outset of conflicts and regional crises. That, in our view, would improve our capacity to identify victims, save their lives and provide them with effective assistance.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of Australia and Switzerland, as well as on behalf of my own country.

Modern slavery and human trafficking are both causes and symptoms of instability and conflicts and a threat to both development and peace and security. Trafficking in persons is a human rights violation and can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity or even genocide. Modern slavery, often resulting from trafficking, exists currently on an unprecedented scale. It undermines the humanity of its victims. The Global Slavery Index estimates that 45 million people live in conditions that qualify as modern slavery, more than ever before, and in spite of the absolute prohibition of slavery under international law. Every single country is affected, which is why it is our joint responsibility to put an end to such crimes.

The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development provides us with a new platform to address those issues. Slavery and trafficking are mentioned in 3 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, an apt reflection of their cross-cutting nature. Fighting human trafficking is not just a law-enforcement challenge, it is a prerequisite for sustainable development and human

rights protection. Work on that topic must therefore be pursued with resolve in the General Assembly.

Modern slavery and human trafficking represent one of the biggest human rights scandals of our time, but are also among the most lucrative business models of organized crime, as they help to fund armed conflict. Forced labour and human trafficking is a $150 billion industry; that is more than the annual gross domestic product of 70 per cent of the States Members of the Organization. One way of combating such crimes is to follow the money — in other words, to disrupt the financial flows associated with it. The involvement of financial institutions, in particular financial intelligence units, is key in such efforts. We welcome the fact that resolution 2331 (2016) refers to the need to use existing criminal laws, including anti-money-laundering, anti-corruption and anti-bribery laws, to investigate, disrupt and dismantle trafficking networks. We are committed to exploring ways to follow up by using the expertise of our national systems.

The Council can also play an important role by addressing the protection gap in existing international response mechanisms. The humanitarian cluster system in particular does not address several key areas. Anti-trafficking strategies should be included in the planning for responses to conflict and humanitarian crises. The Council should also encourage the relevant United Nations system entities to carry out targeted information campaigns to protect civilians vulnerable to trafficking.

Modern slavery prevails with widespread impunity. An overwhelming number of cases are never prosecuted, even though the duty to prevent and punish slavery is an erga omnes obligation of all States. That large impunity gap has created the space for human trafficking and modern slavery to thrive. There is a clear need for better cooperation among States aimed at prosecuting perpetrators of such crimes, which are often transnational. The Palermo Anti-Trafficking Protocol in particular can make an important contribution to that end, and we hope that it will be universally ratified soon. Where national judiciaries have failed, there is a clear case for involving and making use of international criminal justice — for example, the International Criminal Court. Given the universal nature of the phenomenon of modern slavery, the Court can play a dual role: creating incentives for States to investigate and prosecute, and doing so itself where the impunity gap persists.

Although human trafficking affects a cross-section of the population, some groups are more vulnerable to it than others. Sexual and gender-based violence are exacerbated in armed conflict. Trafficking in situations of armed conflict has a particular impact on women and girls. Reports from refugees and migrants arriving in Europe suggest that a vast majority of women and girls have been sexually exploited during their flight from conflict. That is something we need to keep in mind in our humanitarian response, as well as in our migration and human rights policies.

We need to strengthen our own capabilities to identify victims and exploitation in migration movements and ensure that victims receive appropriate assistance and remedy. We should also, individually and collectively, assist and protect those vulnerable to, or victimized by, human trafficking and make sure that victims in conflict are not prosecuted or punished for their experience. It is important to note that, without identification and recognition as victims, their access to reparations once transitional justice measures are taken is seriously hampered.

We wish to highlight that men and boys should be guaranteed the same access to reparations and services. Recent studies on sexual violence against men and boys suggest that they also suffer from a non-recognition of sexual violence committed against them as sexual violence. That wrong needs to be corrected.

The resolution adopted today is a good start. We welcome in particular its gender-inclusive language, but also believe that some paragraphs could have profited from further strengthening — for example, with regard to the important role played by the Financial Action Task Force and regional bodies of that type. We look forward to a consistent political commitment from the Council and remain committed ourselves to our efforts to eradicate this human tragedy.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Lal (India): We thank the delegation of Spain for organizing this open debate and for sharing its informative concept note (S/2016/1031, annex). We appreciate the remarks made by the President of the Government of Spain and by the Secretary-General and the other briefers.

Trafficking in persons across borders has been a cause for concern for some time. The United Nations

Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 55/25) and entered into force 13 years ago. That Convention and its subsequent Protocols represent important steps taken by the international community in its collective fight against transnational organized crime.

The Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which the General Assembly adopted by consensus in 2010 (resolution 64/293), further recognized the global scale of the problem and outlines the coordinated approach required to deal with it. The Plan of Action reaffirms the central role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the global efforts to deal with the issue. It also recognizes the work being carried out by other United Nations entities, such as the International Organization for Migration, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Trafficking in persons is also recognized as a challenge to be overcome in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

India is a signatory to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols and has resolutely addressed various aspects concerning trafficking in persons through a series of laws and other measures. Article 23 of the Indian Constitution specifically addresses the issue. As part of the continuing efforts to strengthen the relevant legal frameworks within India, India unveiled, earlier this year, a comprehensive draft law aimed at the prevention of and protection from the trafficking in persons and the rehabilitation of trafficked persons. The draft legislation aims to unify our existing anti-trafficking laws and prioritize the needs of victims and protect them. India continues to work closely with United Nations agencies, including United Nations Women and UNODC, on related issues. India has entered into various agreements with other countries to combat such crimes. India also works closely with its neighbours to implement the 2002 South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Convention on that issue.

The nexus between organized traffickers and terrorist networks through illicit financial linkages is a dangerous phenomenon. The Secretary-General's report (S/2016/949) notes the low rates of conviction for crimes of trafficking across countries: that needs to change. The persistence of transnational organized crime in that area and its links with terrorist networks represent a challenge that requires us to step up our efforts and use the existing tools and mechanisms to counter terrorist-financing, including sanctions regimes, more effectively in that regard.

Situations of armed conflict provide fertile ground for trafficking in persons, in particular those belonging to vulnerable groups such as women, children and refugees. They are victims of sexual slavery and forced labour, including in the mining sector or as fighters. In recent times, the heinous actions of terrorist groups, such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram, specifically target vulnerable groups, such as women and children, in situations of armed conflict as a deliberate tactic of war, adding another even more serious dimension to such crimes. Such terrorist groups continue to act with impunity.

The primary focus of the Security Council is to address threats to international peace and security. While an increased focus on addressing trafficking in persons and its linkages to terrorism and armed conflicts is timely, we must strengthen international collaboration so as to better utilize the various existing mechanisms, including through more effective coordination of the various entities of the United Nations. Those United Nations entities and mechanisms take a more holistic approach that seeks to address the legal, social and economic contexts of the problem. They provide strong legal and practical frameworks that can enable and facilitate joint responses against trafficking that involves multiple jurisdictions. Their autonomy of decision-making needs to be further strengthened.

While the Security Council should retain its focus on situations of armed conflict, the broader mechanisms should be more fully utilized to strengthen national capacity-building, including in criminal-justice capacities and regulatory frameworks in banking and financial institutions, so as to disrupt illicit financial flows and improve research and analysis, as well as regional and inter-regional cooperation for the protection of victims.

India remains committed to working with the international community in our joint endeavour to eliminate the global challenge of trafficking in persons, including in situations of armed conflict.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium): I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of Argentina, the

Netherlands, Slovenia and my own country, Belgium. First of all, we thank Spain and the Security Council for organizing this ministerial open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations.

Human trafficking is not simply an ordinary category of crime with transnational dimensions but indubitably ranks as one of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. In recent years and in too many parts of the world, widespread conflict-related sexual violence, enslavement and other acts of human trafficking have been reported. This morning we heard the deeply moving testimonies of two representatives of the victims of those crimes. Human trafficking nowadays represents the world's fastest-growing criminal industry.

We welcome the reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361) and on the implementation of measures to counter trafficking in persons (S/2016/949).

In this brief intervention, we wish to give some elements of an answer to two of the main questions asked in the concept note (S/2016/1031, annex), including what Members States can do to better prevent and combat trafficking in persons, particularly as that relates to conflict-related sexual violence, and how we can ensure the accountability of those who engage in trafficking in persons in conflict situations.

Enslavement and conflict-related sexual violence are forbidden by a number of treaties and by customary international law. Moreover, in addition to the statutes and decisions of various international criminal courts and tribunals, most States Members of the United Nations, in their national legal frameworks, consider enslavement, conflict-related sexual violence and other acts that derive from human trafficking in conflict situations to amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. At this point, it is worth recalling that in most cases, States have the jurisdiction to prosecute such crimes, either because the crimes happened fully or in part in their territory or because they have jurisdiction over the victim or over the perpetrator. The primary responsibility to prosecute lies, therefore, with States.

Very often, that proves to be a challenging task. Owing to the transnational nature of this type of crimes, suspects and witnesses, evidence and assets relating to acts of human trafficking will often not be found in the territory of one single State. That means that States that wish to investigate and prosecute such crimes will have to rely heavily on full practical and judicial cooperation from other States to be truly effective. However, an increasing number of States share the opinion of practitioners and legal experts from all regions of the world that the current international procedural legal framework for mutual legal assistance and extradition for such international crimes is incomplete and outdated. They believe that the most efficient and practical way to fill that gap is to open negotiations for a new multilateral instrument for international cooperation.

For that reason, Argentina, Belgium, Slovenia and the Netherlands have taken the initiative to promote negotiations on a multilateral treaty for mutual legal assistance and extradition for domestic prosecution of the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Such a treaty would serve as a tool to facilitate better practical cooperation between States investigating and prosecuting such crimes, which would, in turn, enable them to both comply with their international obligations and empower their national judiciaries. Ensuring accountability for perpetrators engaging in human trafficking is one of the most effective ways to combat and prevent such odious acts.

Looking forward, we believe that the most concrete and effective way for Member States to act against that type of crime would be to join the permanent declaration in support of the opening of negotiations on such a procedural multilateral treaty, and we encourage our colleagues here to do so.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union.

We also co-sponsored resolution 2331 (2016), adopted by the Security Council earlier today. We welcome the fact that the resolution — alongside prevention and prosecution — also puts a strong focus on supporting victims in their recovery and in overcoming traumatization and stigmatization, or, as the Secretary-General said this morning, "in helping victims heal and become agents of change". In conflict and post-conflict settings, the risk that civilians can become victims of trafficking is clear. Those displaced by conflict, especially women and girls and minorities, are particularly vulnerable to that form of crude exploitation.

Recently, Austria was affected by mass migration and refugee movements as a transit and destination country. Close to 90,000 persons applied for asylum in 2015. Most of them came from conflict zones. Aware that persons fleeing conflict risk becoming trafficking victims along their migration route or after arrival in their destination countries, Austria has scaled up measures to enable the active screening of potential trafficking victims among migrants and refugees and to facilitate access to services for identified victims.

We would like to emphasize the important need for all parts of the United Nations system to work effectively together in assisting States to tackle trafficking in persons in conflict zones and also to mainstream the awareness of such issues in humanitarian response and protection efforts. We would also like to highlight the key role and contribution of civil society in enhancing the identification and referral of victims of trafficking, including those originating from conflict and post-conflict areas.

Austria is currently supporting projects conducted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. The projects aim at building the capacities of front-line officials and at improving the identification and integration of victims of human trafficking along migration routes. We would also like to take this opportunity to encourage all States to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, as Nadia Murad and the Secretary-General have also called for today.

Conflict-related sexual violence and sex as payment for passage for women and girls on the move, as well as the sexual enslavement of and trading in women and girls by terrorist groups, are a shockingly common reality. Austria hosted an international conference in June this year, entitled "Fighting Conflict-Related Sexual Violence — Grassroots Women as Agents of Change", which focused specifically on the contribution and the role of women in civil society in Syria and Iraq. We reiterate our support for the important work on that topic by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict.

With its portfolio of technical assistance programmes, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has been and continues to be a central partner in assisting Member States in implementing practical measures to combat trafficking in persons. We are also particularly appreciative of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, which, through its monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children, documents abductions of children and related violations, including human trafficking.

A substantial number of radicalized foreign fighters — also from Austria — have joined terrorist groups in conflict areas and might, among other crimes, be perpetrators of human trafficking. In that regard, we fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation that Member States consider establishing jurisdiction to prosecute instances of human trafficking committed by their nationals abroad.

We would like to emphasize that States have the primary responsibility for bringing perpetrators to justice and ending the climate of impunity. In post-conflict settings, accountability and transitional-justice mechanisms are key elements for sustainable peace. We also call on those States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Palermo Anti-Trafficking Protocol.

With the assumption of the chairmanship of the OSCE in 2017, Austria will further put a spotlight on the interlinkages between migration and trafficking and between radicalization, terrorism and trafficking.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. El Nour.

Mr. El Nour: I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). I would like to start by thanking Spain and the Security Council for convening this ministerial open debate on the topic "Trafficking in persons in conflict situations". The international community has increasingly focused on the topic of human trafficking in the past decade. However, the crime of human trafficking, which results in horrendous human rights violations, remains largely overlooked in emergency situations.

In my brief intervention, I would like to address the question of how we can work together to confront human trafficking in conflicts, how to better implement robust victim identification mechanisms and how humanitarian action can effectively support the victims of human trafficking. Research on that topic has consistently found evidence that emergency situations

exacerbate pre-existing risks to human trafficking and create additional ones that are specific to the crisis setting. Human trafficking in conflict situations is often a consequence of the erosion of the rule of law, the desperation of individuals following the disruption of economic activities, or the potential intrusion by criminal networks into refugee camps and camps for internally displaced persons.

We need to collectively understand that counter-trafficking efforts in emergencies are a matter of life and death. Employing counter-trafficking measures in crises settings helps to prevent individuals from falling victim to highly exploitative practices that can seriously impair their physical or psychological well-being and potentially endanger their lives. In that regard, the International Organization for Migration, in close cooperation with its humanitarian partners, has consistently been working on the issue of human trafficking and exploitation in crisis settings, and has already operationalized its response through the integration of the protection and assistance of crisis-affected trafficking victims into humanitarian responses as lifesaving measures.

IOM has further made extensive use of its Displacement Tracking Matrix tool to assess the exposure to trafficking along migratory routes and to measure the risk to trafficking faced by actual and potential victims in camps and crisis-affected communities. The International Organization for Migration strongly supports the Council's efforts to eliminate human trafficking in conflict situations and hopes that the Council will take into account the humanitarian dimension of crisis-induced human trafficking.

In closing, I want to say that I welcome the adoption of Security Council 2331 (2016) today, and we stand ready to support the Council in that regard.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Wiśniewski (Poland): Let me begin by expressing our condolences to our German and Russian colleagues following the tragic terrorist attack in Berlin and the tragic assassination of Ambassador Andrey Karlov in Ankara. We ask them to accept our sympathy and words of condolence.

We thank Spain for organizing today's important open debate and for facilitating the adoption of the ambitious resolution 2331 (2016) on trafficking of persons in conflict situations, which Poland proudly co-sponsored.

Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union, but I would like to add some further comments in my national capacity.

The findings in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of measures to counter trafficking in persons (S/2016/949), released in November this year, are worrisome and alarming. The report acknowledges various instances of human trafficking, both within and beyond conflict zones. Civilian populations, notably women and often children, often war refugees and migrants, are subjected to a wide range of forms of exploitation, including sexual violence, forced and compulsory labour, enslavement, as well as forcible recruitment into armed services.

Particularly disturbing is the nexus between conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking, acknowledged earlier in the Secretary-General's report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361/Rev.1). Abductions of women and children, systematic and widespread exploitation and abuse, including rape, sexual violence, forced marriages and sex slavery, perpetrated by Da'esh, Boko Haram and other terrorist and armed groups, are horrifying and deeply deplorable, and demand our immediate response. We are also alarmed by the widespread practice of the recruitment of children by parties to conflicts, including in Syria. In that context, I wish to reiterate the primary responsibility of State authorities for ensuring the safety of its population, especially members of ethnic and religious minorities.

Twenty years ago, at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, Poland submitted the first draft of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which was adopted by the Assembly in 2000 (resolution 55/25). We subsequently also ratified its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. We are also a State party to the International Labour Organization's Forced Labour Convention and its Protocol and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention. We join the Council in urging countries that have not yet done so to embrace the international legal framework for preventing and combating trafficking in persons. Adopting appropriate measures

within national legal systems is the first step in efforts to combat and prosecute such crimes and hold perpetrators accountable.

We must also accelerate the international response to that dangerous and inhumane phenomenon, which undermines fundamental human rights and gravely impacts the lives of victims and affects whole communities. We appreciate the work of international bodies such as the International Criminal Police Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. We urge Member States to cooperate even more closely on that common challenge.

Apart from governmental cooperation, building partnerships with civil society and the private sector should foster information sharing and the identification and protection of victims, with the goal of dismantling criminal networks involved in trafficking in persons. Cooperation with the private sector is especially important, so as to cut off funding sources to terrorist and violent extremist groups, which often profit from human trafficking. Fighting sexual and gender-based violence must be better reflected in counter-terrorist efforts.

Last but not least, we must ensure that the stories of trafficking not fall into dehumanizing silence by making the voices of survivors well heard. To conclude, we once again applaud Spain's initiative to discuss this topic in this forum, and we appreciate Spain's work on resolution 2331 (2016), which complements the existing framework aimed at fighting human trafficking in conflict situations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nicaragua.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): We offer our condolences to the family of Ambassador Andrey Karlov and the Government and the people of Russia.

Allow me to congratulate Spain on so efficiently presiding over the Security Council during the month of December. At the same time, we would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting on such an important topic. We agree with the President's concept note (S/2016/1031, annex), which reiterates the importance and need for the United Nations to redouble its efforts to eliminate trafficking in persons in conflict situations.

However, our approach and contribution to the debate are focused on the prevention of trafficking in persons in all circumstances. It should be fought even when it takes place in non-conflict situations. Trafficking in persons is a global problem that affects more than 29 million children, women and men who are subjected to sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and organ harvesting. It is in itself a violation of human rights. It is a most abominable crime that destroys the essence of people, their life, freedom and integrity. It turns human beings into commodities, leading to the degradation of the dignity and physical and mental health of people, leaving indelible imprints on the social fabric.

Our people, who have experienced the scourge of war at first hand, today live in peace and reconciliation, led by Commander Daniel Ortega, who is working with determination to eliminate trafficking in persons. Being a small country with limited resources, we are making our contribution to the international community in maintaining a firm position of vigilance and in comprehensively addressing the topic within a legal and normative framework. We have a nation-wide coalition to detect, prevent, protect and rehabilitate victims of human trafficking at the national level and to ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes are effectively punished. In January 2015, we adopted Law No. 896 against trafficking in persons, which determines the aims and modalities of the crime, the protected legal goods and the criminal classification of the crime. That instrument is based on prevention, offering individual recommendations for people and their families.

Our Government is also working with other countries in our area through a regional system that facilitates the rescue of victims with a view to strengthening prevention as well. However, international financial and technical cooperation are always crucial for us to be able to combat such scourge. If we want to put an end to trafficking in persons in conflict situations, we must begin by looking at the root cause of the conflict. No country in the international community can claim the right to use or threaten to use force in international relations. That form of exceptionalism not only does not resolve conflicts, it fuels them, just as we have seen in recent years. Conflicts are resolved through dialogue and political negotiation, and the United Nations, based on the Charter of the United Nations, must assume its

responsibility and be the main organization to ensure global peace.

Nicaragua — a small country that bases its policies on Christian values, socialist principles and solidarity within this complex global context — has been working purposefully in the various regional and international forums to promote policies of peace, unity and understanding among nations, promoting politically negotiated solutions to conflicts and the right of our people to achieve their sustainable development and well-being. Our country continues to focus its efforts on strengthening the family unit and education, important factors in efforts to forge strong societies that are committed to working, maintaining their well-being and developing themselves. Our Government will continue to bolster its policies to combat the scourge before us and protect our societies from it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Plasai (Thailand): First of all, I wish, on behalf of my Government, to express our deepest condolences to the Russian Federation for the tragic assassination of Ambassador Andrei Karlov in Ankara yesterday.

The prevalence of human trafficking in conflict situation is of grave concern and requires collective and comprehensive efforts and an immediate and decisive response. We share wth previous speakers the concern regarding the nexus between conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking, particularly the cases that involve United Nations personnel and peacekeepers. As a troop-contributing country, the Kingdom of Thailand welcomes the efforts of the Security Council and the United Nations system to address and respond to reports of trafficking in persons, as well as sexual exploitation and abuse, in the context of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of resolution 2331 (2016). We reaffirm our commitment to cooperating with the international community in combatting all forms of human trafficking, and we place that agenda at the top of our national priorities. We are trying to effectively address this critical issue through a five-pillar strategy, which is very much in line with the globally recognized strategy of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in addressing human trafficking. The five pillars are: policy, prosecution, protection, prevention and partnership. The implementation of the strategy focuses on nine key areas, namely, the rule of law, anti-complicity and anti-corruption, expediting the administrative and judicial process against human trafficking cases, effectiveness of frontline operations, reduction of risk for vulnerable groups, improved victim and witness protection, integrated efforts against child exploitation, enhanced partnership, and public awareness and outreach.

Concerning policy, I would like to underline that our policy focuses on taking steps to ensure the effective implementation of our international obligations, particularly the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

The Kingdom of Thailand has made consistent efforts to strengthen its judicial institutions and improve its proactive law enforcement, in order to investigate cases, rescue victims and prosecute those involved with human trafficking syndicates in a timely and efficient manner. We place high priority on protection of and assistance to victims of trafficking by addressing all aspects of their essential needs. We support the creation of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which provides humanitarian, legal and financial aid to victims of human trafficking. We therefore strongly encourage Member States in a position to do so to contribute to the Voluntary Trust Fund.

With regard to prevention, the most efficient preventive measure is to tackle the root causes of conflict, in order to reduce the risk of conflict-affected vulnerable groups falling into the hands of human traffickers. National and local campaigns, as well as community-based activities, have been carried out to raise awareness of human trafficking.

Concerning partnership, the Royal Thai Government attaches importance to forging strategic partnerships with the private sector, civil society, academia and the media in the fight against human trafficking. We are also of the view that close cooperation with key stakeholders at all levels is crucial for achieving a sustainable solution to the problem.

The success of our common fight against human trafficking requires an integrated approach and well-coordinated efforts of all concerned. The United Nations

can play a leading role in that regard. October 2017 will be an opportune time to strengthen those efforts, as the international community will be appraising the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons through a mandated high-level meeting of the General Assembly. We hope that the meeting will help to identify the challenges and gaps in the implementation of the Plan of Action and enhance States' capacity to put an end to this heinous crime.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Let me start by expressing our deepest condolences to the Government and Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation for the tragic attack against His Excellency Ambassador Andrey Karlov. Our condolences also go to the victims of the Berlin market attack. Our prayers go to their bereaved families.

I would like to thank Spain for convening this open debate. I also thank His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon and the other briefers for their remarks.

All human beings possess fundamental human rights, which are inherent to their noble dignity and respect. Trafficking in persons is a wicked crime that violates those rights. The trafficking of vulnerable people, especially women and children, who should be protected in conflict situations, is an even more heinous crime; they are deceived or abducted into exploitation, torture and servitude. Indonesia condemns modern slavery and human trafficking and supports their elimination. Like others, we welcome the adoption of resolution 2331 (2016) today.

Recognizing the seriousness of the problem, the Indonesian Government has taken concrete action at the national, regional and international levels. At the national level, the Government of Indonesia enacted Law Number 21 of 2007, which criminalizes all kinds of human trafficking. At the regional level, Indonesia and Australia initiated the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, in 2002. Besides effectively raising regional awareness of the consequences of people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crimes, the Bali Process has also developed and implemented strategies and practical cooperation in its response.

At the international level, Indonesia has ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. In 2015, we joined the international community in adopting the Sustainable Development Goals, which, inter alia, also commit to taking action against human trafficking.

Despite a strong collective push to raise the bar in stopping such human exploitation at all levels, there has been intense defiance from the perpetrators. However, the international community cannot relent in discouraging human trafficking in conflict zones. All methods, including denouncing, disrupting and protecting should be exercised. But perhaps the best method would be prevention and protection, which can be achieved in many ways.

First and foremost, investing in the prevention of conflict is one of the best protections against human trafficking. Yet in cases where conflict prevention may not necessarily be possible, the international community needs to commit to resolve the conflicts in which human trafficking thrives.

Secondly, we should more robustly implement the international Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, including in conflict settings — be it the trafficking of persons who are fleeing a conflict or those trafficked into forced military service and in post-conflict reconstruction work.

Thirdly, the United Nations system's capabilities could be enhanced to protect those vulnerable to human trafficking in conflict. We could analyse further ways to incorporate humanitarian actions with human trafficking. From the outset of a conflict crisis, anti-trafficking measures should be incorporated into all humanitarian interventions in conflict zones as part of life-saving protection activities.

It is unfortunate that humanitarian action is intended in some cases to be a temporary fix for populations that are experiencing hazardous situations. We should take a long-term view in terms of empowering vulnerable populations, so that they can play an active role in preventing human trafficking. In short, it is pertinent to employ anti-trafficking strategies in the planning and implementation of humanitarian responses, so as to ensure durable solutions.

Lastly, those who engage in human trafficking will remain determined to challenge our cause. The international community must never relent in countering human traffickers. Let us fight against exploitation and bring those responsible to account and to justice. We must preserve the dignity of all human beings.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the representative of Canada.

Mr. Grant (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada thanks Spain for bringing the issue of people trafficking in situations of conflict to the attention of the Security Council and for its leadership on the matter.

Trafficking in persons is a sordid crime that deprives people of their freedom and exploits some of the most vulnerable members of our societies. It has devastating effects on the physical, mental and emotional health of survivors, their families and communities. In situations of conflict, civilians, particularly women and girls, are extremely vulnerable to being trafficked and to sexual violence. The international community must ensure that the response to situations of conflict, including those related to terrorist activities, takes into account the need to prevent trafficking in persons, protect the victims of that crime and prosecute perpetrators.

Canada has been working to keep the issue of violence against women and girls, including the appalling atrocities committed by Da'esh, at the top of the global agenda. Furthermore, we are committed to ensuring that Da'esh is held to account for its crimes. In October, Canada's Parliament recognized the findings of the Commission of Inquiry that atrocities committed by Da'esh against the Yazidis of Sinjar constitute genocide. Our Parliament unanimously adopted a motion to provide asylum to the most vulnerable Yazidi women and girls.

Sexual and gender-based violence is a serious barrier to the recovery of communities after armed conflict. In addition to the provision of services to survivors, the international community must hold perpetrators to account in order to break the culture of impunity and provide justice to survivors. Canada commends the comprehensive approach taken by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura, as well as the work of t the Team of Experts on Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, and UN Action. We also commend the partnership between UN-Women and Justice Rapid Response and their work in deploying experts to investigate and document such crimes with a view to supporting prosecutions by national or international tribunals.

Human trafficking creates extraordinary profits for both terrorist and criminal organizations. By employing the tools developed to combat financial crime, we can deprive them of funding and access to the international financial system, making it more difficult for them to accomplish their destructive goals.

Canada strongly supports the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities to list the financial facilitators of Da'esh, Al-Qaida and affiliated groups, and the work of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to push all countries to implement effective, risk-based anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing regimes. Canada is encouraged by the Security Council's close cooperation with the FATF and its regional bodies in that effort.

Canada is proud to have joined 60 Member States in co-sponsoring resolution 2331 (2016), adopted earlier today and we welcome the attention of the Security Council on this important matter.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Koncke.

Mr. Koncke (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS), I extend condolences to the Permanent Mission of Russia following the attack that claimed the life of Ambassador Andrey Karlov, and to the Permanent Mission of Germany following the attack carried out in Berlin.

I am honoured to take part in today's open debate in the Security Council on behalf of the Secretary General of the Organization of American States. First, I thank the Spanish presidency of the Security Council for its initiative to convene today's debate to address a topic of extreme importance and pressing urgency and that requires shared commitments, multidimensional approaches and the highest sense of political will of countries and other actors to combat and eradicate it.

We are fully confident that today's debate and the adoption of resolution 2331 (2016) will contribute decisively to the efforts of the Security Council and

Member States to establish and empower judicial systems and other institutional mechanisms aimed at preventing, criminalizing, combating and eradicating this scourge, above all when it also serves as a source of funding for criminal organizations and terrorist groups in situations of armed conflict.

Human trafficking is one of the most despicable expressions of human barbarism. In the more than 50 armed conflicts plaguing the world, this crime intensifies violence and the expressions of terrorism, prolongs the suffering of its victims and delays or nullifies the development of communities. In addition, it is an ongoing violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In many cases, the underlying link between transnational organized crime and conflict situations is undeniable.

Human trafficking in our hemisphere focuses on sexual exploitation, mainly of women and girls or adolescents. In our region, regional and international routes have been identified, and in many countries, the practices used by criminal groups to capture victims have also been recognized, as well as victims' places of origin and destination. Although we now enjoy unprecedented peace in our region, thanks to the recent signing of the peace agreement achieved in Colombia, we cannot give up on the fight against the threat posed by transnational organized crime, since it is a reality that is measured in lives and victims, including those subjected to human trafficking. Let me share some of the efforts made by OAS to end this crime.

All countries of the hemisphere have committed to adhering to the terms of the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. In 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2014, Venezuela, Argentina, Guatemala and Brazil, respectively, hosted high-level meetings on the subject, the last of which adopted the Declaration of Brasilia and the Second Work Plan against Trafficking in Persons in the Western Hemisphere 2015-2018. These constitute the framework for guiding efforts in the region.

The Work Plan takes into account the different manifestations of exploitation considered as human trafficking, and pays special attention to vulnerable, at-risk groups and indigenous populations and other traditional communities, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons groups. The mandates and guidelines of the Second Work Plan include the establishment of mechanisms for the periodic monitoring of strategies, the criminalization of trafficking according to the seriousness of the crime, special emphasis on minors under 18 years of age, access to protection mechanisms for victims regardless of their immigration status and participation in illegal activities, and capacity-building and the strengthening of the institutional governance of countries.

Within that framework, together with the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and with funding from the European Union, since 2014 OAS has implemented the Inter-American Programme for the Prevention of Irregular Migration in Mesoamerica. The Programme covers eight countries in the region and has three complementary components: prevention, confrontation and protection.

In addition, the inter-American crime and violence prevention programme was launched in 2015. It includes the prevention of human trafficking. It is being implemented as a pilot project in Brazil and will continue in Honduras next year. Recently, the Organized Transnational Crime Department was created within the OAS General Secretariat. It seeks to address the challenges faced by the western hemisphere with regard to such crimes The efforts made by OAS in that regard should not be viewed in isolation, but, rather, as being linked to the four strategic pillars of the organization: democracy, human rights, integrated development and multidimensional security — all under the slogan of "More rights for more people".

A challenge in the fight against human trafficking is the existence of networks that corrupt public authority, built around criminal organizations and their links with the private sector and terrorist groups that use human trafficking as a source of financing, as acknowledged by the fourth *Global Survey of the Implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) by Member States*.

To conclude, I should like to share a few thoughts and suggestions based on experiences in our region.

Combating human trafficking requires a multidimensional security approach, a combination of national efforts and bilateral and multilateral measures and active cooperation with regional organizations. The legal dimension, through the classification of crimes related to human trafficking, must be a key pillar in efforts by Member States, as well as in the

development of criminal classifications related to the fight against money-laundering and the financing of terrorism in order to combat human trafficking, in particular in conflict affected areas. Strengthening capacity-building is an essential tool for improving border control and management, identifying falsified documents and prosecuting trafficking networks.

I would like to conclude by expressing the full confidence of the secretariat of the OAS that today's open debate will be an essential contribution to the task of preventing, combating and eradicating the trade and trafficking in human beings, to which the organization I represent is fully committed.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

Mr. Jinga (Romania): I would like to begin by expressing our sincere condolences on the assassination of Mr. Andrey Karlov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Ankara, and to the loved ones of the victims of the terrorist attack in Berlin.

I would like to congratulate Spain on its remarkable and accomplished two-year term on the Security Council, and to thank the Spanish delegation for organizing today's open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. I commend their efforts with regard to today's adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2331 (2016), of which Romania was a sponsor.

Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union, to which I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Conflicts are becoming more closely linked to terrorist activities, while human trafficking plays an increasing role in the operations of terrorist organizations, generating revenue and functioning as an instrument for eliminating those who oppose them. It is well known that internally displaced and refugee women and girls in areas controlled by Da'esh have been sold or forcibly married to fighters in armed groups. The horrendous crimes committed against Yazidi women and girls in particular have generated deep sympathy worldwide. We must help the survivors to cope with the long-lasting physical and psychological trauma of the abuse they have endured. We welcome the appointment of Nadia Murad Basee Taha, a survivor of Da'esh human trafficking who presented her testimony earlier today, as a Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking.

Prevention is key in both conflict and non-conflict situations. The role in prevention of personnel deployed in United Nations peacekeeping operations should be enhanced. Developing predeployment curriculums that emphasize the specifics of trafficking in persons would help to increase peacekeepers' knowledge of the problem in order to help them better identify and combat it. Everyone with access to areas of conflict, including representatives of civil society and humanitarian actors, should also receive this type of training.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2016/949) identifies the complex nexus that exists between trafficking in persons, organized crime, corruption, armed conflict and terrorism. But it requires further mapping. We cannot successfully combat human trafficking at the national level alone, for cooperation at the regional and international levels is also key. Civil society, the private sector and the media should be major partners in that regard. Ensuring the continued use of mechanisms to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism, including sanctions regimes, will contribute further to tracking and halting the problem. We believe we should also make use of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which gives us a clear mandate for taking immediate and effective measures to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking. After drug trafficking, human trafficking is the world's single-largest criminal enterprise. Its commodity is human beings, bought and sold with no consideration for human dignity. Today there are more slaves in the world than there have ever been in the history of humankind — an estimated 27 million adults and 13 million children.

Romania's national anti-human-trafficking agency coordinates the activities of the authorities dealing with human trafficking, as well as protecting and assisting victims. It is currently cooperating with 64 different partners, including some from civil society. There is a dedicated unit within the Romanian national police of 15 regional teams of specialized officers, totalling 250 operational staff. Our police border department has 400 officers attached to Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, working with European border and coast guard teams fighting human and drug trafficking. Twenty-two Romanian debriefing experts are also helping to identify trafficking victims among immigrants. Romanian personnel in United Nations

peacekeeping operations receive predeployment training on how to identify and protect victims of human trafficking.

Finally, Romania remains fully committed to the global efforts to deal with this issue. The fight is part of our collective sense of humanity.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Danon (Israel): Israel joins the many delegations here that have condemned the terrible terror attacks in Berlin and in Turkey on the Russian Ambassador. Terror is terror, and we are united with the rest of the international community in condemning and opposing such terrible crimes.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of people, mostly women and children, are trafficked across borders worldwide, in a crime of humankind against humankind. It should outrage every person because it debases our fellow human beings. It should outrage every community because it erodes societies. And it should outrage every nation because it funds organized crime and terrorist groups and threatens international peace and security. It is worth emphasizing that human trafficking is a multibillion-dollar industry. While in the past trafficking in persons, like drug and arms trafficking, was mostly run by organized criminal groups, in today's world we are witnessing an alarming increase in the involvement of terrorist groups such as Da'esh and Boko Haram.

A year ago, we all had the chance to hear in person the horrific story of Nadia Murad, a Yazidi refugee and victim of trafficking, in the first-ever Security Council debate dedicated to trafficking in persons (see S/PV.7585). In October, in an effort to raise awareness of the dire situation of Yazidi women and girls, the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations hosted an event focused on trauma treatment for refugees who manage to escape the bloodshed in Syria and Iraq. At that event, we had the opportunity to hear from a young woman named Marwa Al Aliko, a Yazidi refugee from Iraq who was captured and trafficked by Da'esh and forced into slavery before she was able to escape. In that meeting, Marwa said that

> "the Da'esh fighters took us captive and put us in a small room. Every night the men would come to us and do as they pleased. After a few days one of the men bought me and my two sisters and took us to Syria. Ten days later, they separated us and I was all alone."

Unfortunately, it seems that the international community has failed Marwa and her family and friends.

In recent years the Syrian conflict has turned the Middle East into a breeding ground for human traffickers. Unfortunately, that is not limited to Da'esh alone but also extends to the Syrian regime. According to the 2016 report of the United States Department of State on trafficking in persons, the actions of the Syrian Government, as well as Hizbullah, continue to worsen the problem of human trafficking crimes. We must condemn those acts and demand that the Syrian Government uphold its international obligations by refraining from using child soldiers, protecting women who have been sold as sex slaves and prosecuting traffickers, whether they are Government officials or terrorists.

Israel shares fully in the global concern about this issue and in the commitment to continuing to fight to eliminate trafficking in persons. Combating human trafficking is a high priority for our Government. We are a party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Palermo Protocol on trafficking in persons. In fact, we are fully engaged in the fight against trafficking in persons through all four Ps — prevention, prosecution, protection and partnership.

The first is prevention. We introduced a comprehensive anti-trafficking law in 2006 and adopted national plans of action. Eradicating the plague of trafficking and slavery requires partnership at all levels. To achieve that, we appointed a national anti-trafficking coordinator to coordinate efforts between the Government and non-governmental organizations. The second is prosecution. We have invested in our intelligence and law enforcement agencies in order to identify trafficking networks, prosecute perpetrators and enforce tough sentences. The third is protection. We have introduced a network of services to help locate trafficked persons and provide victims with support. They are given a safe place to stay in a Government-funded shelter, free legal aid, a work visa and the medical and psychological support they so desperately need to begin rehabilitation. Recently, the special forfeiture fund for the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking was activated and allocated funds to more than 45 victims and five non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for

various rehabilitation purposes, including recovery and reintegration. And the fourth, and last, is partnership among all stakeholders, namely, Government, civil society and the private sector. Our success is largely due to the valuable partnerships we have formed with NGOs. They are critical in every phase of the process.

Each one of us has a responsibility. Every nation must take action by adopting strong anti-trafficking laws, strengthening enforcement mechanisms and introducing tougher penalties. Trafficking preys on those without a voice, and therefore we must be the voice ourselves. We must be the voice of the man who is lured by the promise of a higher-paying job, but ends up toiling in hard labour in horrific conditions under the threat of violence. We must be the voice of the child who is told she would have a better life, but is raped and forced into prostitution. We must be the voice of women such as Marwa and Nadia and so many others. We must show them through our actions that they are not alone.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to express my condolences to the Government of Germany and the Government of Russia for the tragic events that took place recently. Unfortunately, terror and madness are just around the corner and can affect us all.

Moving on to today's topic, I would like to thank the Kingdom of Spain for convening this important open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations.

Argentina would like to point out that, while the threat of trafficking in persons may in fact increase in conflict situations, it is important to bear in mind that the United Nations has already developed a sophisticated system to fight trafficking, which has been designed through resolutions of the General Assembly, in particular under the agenda items entitled "Crime prevention and criminal justice" and "Advancement of women".

Indeed, the General Assembly has discussed this issue and adopted resolutions on combating trafficking since the forty-ninth session, through annual resolutions that have fed into and promoted the negotiation and adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and in particular its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, to supplement the Convention. Also, in 2010, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and since 2014 has observed the World Day against Trafficking in Persons on 30 July.

Those instruments have also provided a clear mandate for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the framework of the fight against trafficking. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has developed extensive experience in implementing appropriate mechanisms and tools to address the issue, including, among other initiatives, the Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons and the provision of technical assistance to States. Argentina values and acknowledges those efforts.

In that context, it is important to note that Goal 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) expressly refers to the problem of combating forced labor, modern slavery and trafficking in persons. Moreover, its implementation, review and monitoring is carried out under the framework of the mechanisms established by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Under the coordination of the International Labour Organization, Argentina has played an active role in the development of Alliance 8.7, in order to achieve that Goal. Argentina has long been committed to combating trafficking in persons as one of the worst forms of violence against human beings, which endangers the dignity of all people. Our commitment has always placed priority on preventing this crime and punishing its perpetrators, while improving the Government's ability to assist and protect its victims.

At the national level, we established an executive committee on combating the trafficking and exploitation of persons and protecting and assisting the victims, as well as a federal council on combating trafficking. The executive committee, set up in September 2013, is tasked with implementing a national programme to combat human trafficking and exploitation and protect and assist victims. It includes representatives from the Ministry of Security, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security. The executive committee develops and implements awareness-raising campaigns and is in charge of training civil servants to address the problem of trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation and related crimes in order to understand the complexity

of the crime and its direct links to drug trafficking and organized crime.

For its part, the federal council on combating human trafficking, set up in July, is responsible for designing a federal strategy to combat human trafficking and exploitation and promote the adoption by various jurisdictions of standards of conduct, protocols and intervention networks to ensure effective protection and respect for the rights of victims of trafficking and exploitation. The federal council is made up of national ministries, Government agencies and representatives of civil society.

We therefore believe that it is important that the Security Council, as the principal organ of the United Nations, be sensitive to the problem of trafficking. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the issue as such falls under the purview of the General Assembly and that the Organization has developed a sophisticated mechanism for addressing the legal framework provided by the Palermo Convention and its Protocol, with the guidance provided by the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons as a fundamental tool for the implementation of national public policies on this issue.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate your friendly country, Sir, for presiding over the Security Council during the month December. We also thank you for convening this important debate. We also welcome the fact that His Excellency the President of the Government of Spain presided over the meeting this morning. We also welcome the Council's adoption of resolution 2331 (2016), which we co-sponsored.

Moreover, I would be remiss not to associate myself with the statement to be delivered by the representatative of Bahrain on behalf of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking.

The reports presented include appalling statistics on the spread of human trafficking. They also bear out the causal relationship between conflict and the spread of human trafficking. A look at the ongoing conflicts all over the world and their abhorrent repercussions, leads us to conclude that forced migration is fundamental to those conflicts, which have pushed hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes in search of greater security and a life of dignity. We have all seen the painful images of those who have paid their lives due to the exploitation of refugees by human traffickers.

While we highlight the important measures undertaken by the international community to address trafficking in persons, the real challenge facing us is not limited to promoting frameworks and means to combat the phenomenon. Instead, we should address the root causes that have led to such exacerbation. We are talking about protracted and new conflicts that have pushed innocent civilians to seek safety and peace. They are therefore prone to danger in their own countries, which are suffering from poverty and conflict, or are in situations of displacement or are seeking asylum or are migrating to other countries in order to flee death and destruction. Adding to the dangers associated with the phenomenon of human trafficking is the use by terrorist groups of young people who are recruited to carry out terrorist operations.

While referring to the horrific repercussions of conflicts and policies that violate the fundamental rights of individuals and peoples, we would also like to stress that conflict provides an environment conducive to human trafficking. The international community has failed to address those conflicts and crisis that indirectly contribute to the further spread of this phenomenon.

The friendly people of Syria have paid a very high price owing to the failure of the Security Council to save civilians and reach a solution to the crisis in their country, which is now in its sixth year. The appalling and unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Syria has unfortunately been exacerbated in Aleppo, where an increasing number of civilians find themselves in situations of forced migration. The many security and other repercussions of this situation will have an impact on regional and international peace and security.

Furthermore, we would like to stress that, should the international community should succeed in putting an end to human trafficking, we would still need to address the root causes and find just solutions to conflicts and crisis, fight impunity and ensure accountability.

The State of Qatar has supported the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons since its inception. We have enacted many legislative measures aimed at combating trafficking in persons. We have also cooperated internationally and promulgated laws that criminalize the human-trafficking phenomenon. In 2015, we hosted the thirteenth United

Nations Conference on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The Doha communiqué that was issued following the Conference endorsed a comprehensive approach to combating the crime of human trafficking. We are also one of the major supporters of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which is the primary United Nations agency operating in this field. In same vein, we have been one of the main contributors to the United Nations Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking since its establishment.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar will spare no effort to support the efforts of the Security Council to put an end to the phenomenon of human trafficking and to all conflicts and crises and bring about peace and security in our region and the world at large.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Wilson (Australia): I will start by joining others in expressing our condolences to Russia for the shocking attack on its Ambassador in Turkey yesterday. Our thoughts and sadness are with family and loved ones and the Russian people at this terrible time.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Liechtenstein.

Australia is deeply concerned about trafficking in persons. We know that armed conflict and instability — and the resulting economic desperation — amplifies the risk of human trafficking for vulnerable people, especially women and children, people with disabilities, migrants and displaced people. Sadly, refugee and internal displacement camps are particularly fertile ground for human traffickers. With the highest-ever number of people displaced in the world today, there are now a great many who are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, and we must work to protect them from this scourge.

We have a shared responsibility to disrupt this evil trade and address its root causes. No one State or organization can do it alone. Australia encourages United Nations efforts to strengthen coordination to develop a more strategic and coherent international response. We consider that Alliance 8.7 is a useful vehicle for bringing key United Nations agencies, Member States and non-governmental stakeholders together, to accelerate efforts to effectively combat trafficking. We should also ensure that the 2017 review of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons makes a practical contribution.

Preventing and combating human trafficking and slavery is a priority of the Australian Government. We are working with countries in the Asia-Pacific region to stamp out these barbaric and criminal practices and to find innovative development approaches that stimulate opportunity and hope for people as close to their homes as possible, in order to reduce their vulnerability. Through the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, Australia is working with Indonesia, with which we co-Chair the Process, to reinvigorate efforts to establish regional cooperation on these issues. In March 2016, we adopted the Bali Declaration, which represents strengthened political commitment to protecting vulnerable people who are on the move in our region.

In May, the Bali Process held a regional forum on using financial investigation tools and techniques to investigate, disrupt and prosecute human-trafficking cases. In terms similar to those set out in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/949), it highlighted the benefits of using "follow the money" techniques in human-trafficking cases.

In May next year, we will launch the Bali Process Business Forum, which will highlight the importance of involving business in addressing and preventing human trafficking. The Forum will bring together private sector leaders from the 45 member countries of the Bali Process to focus on best practices in eradicating human trafficking and slavery and to make recommendations to ministers.

We must remain focused and continue to work together diligently to stamp out trafficking in persons, prosecute those who perpetuate this heinous crime, address the needs of victims and protect those who are most vulnerable.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations.

Archbishop Auza: Trafficking in persons is at the heart of the Holy See's preoccupations. People of goodwill, whatever their religious beliefs, can never allow women, children and men to be treated merely as objects, or to be deceived, violated, often sold and resold for profit, leaving them devastated in mind and body only to be finally eliminated or abandoned.

Such treatment is shameful and barbaric. It must be condemned unequivocally. The full force of the law must be brought to bear upon those who commit such crimes.

The Holy See notes that the report (S/2016/949) of the Secretary-General on the implementation of measures to counter trafficking in persons includes a wealth of statistics and highlights the many issues that are involved in this villainous practice. The report clearly shows the complexity of trafficking in persons as an international phenomenon and illustrates the multifaceted nature of the problem, whose resolution will require the collaboration of all, including in particular faith-based and faith-inspired organizations and other civil-society groups, which are very much present on the ground.

Pope Francis, who has made the fight against trafficking in persons and other forms of modern slavery a high priority, declared that modern slavery in the form of human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution or trafficking in organs is a crime against humanity. Among the many causes and factors that abet contemporary forms of slavery like trafficking in persons are poverty, underdevelopment and exclusion, especially when combined with a lack of access to education or scarce, or even non-existent, employment opportunities, as widespread corruption and unrestrained greed rob the human person of a dignified life.

At present, however, the biggest single factor that facilitates trafficking in persons is war and armed conflict. Trafficking in persons is flourishing alongside today's refugee and migrant crisis, which has been primarily provoked by wars and conflicts. It is therefore pertinent that the Security Council examine the plague of trafficking in persons in conflict situations.

If the fight against trafficking in persons is to be effective, the international community must unite in the common commitment to put an end to the fighting, hatred and violence, and to pursue peace and reconciliation. The Holy See remains firmly convinced that the way to resolve open questions such as that of trafficking in persons must be that of diplomacy and dialogue, in order to resolve conflicts and end wars.

The Holy See encourages the Security Council to continue fighting against the scourge of trafficking in persons, primarily through preventing and ending armed conflicts. The challenge that trafficking in persons poses is immense, and all must assume their respective responsibilities and collaborate with one another. The Holy See is committed to playing its part in meeting this challenge.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Greece.

Mrs. Boura (Greece): I would like to join others in expressing condolences to Russia in connection with the assassination of its Ambassador in Ankara, and to Germany in connection with the victims of the terrorist attack in Berlin.

I wish to congratulate Spain for having organized this open debate. Greece aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and wishes to add the following from a national point of view.

Over the past two decades, the ground-breaking work of the United Nations bodies, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the International Organization for Migration and regional initiatives such as the European Union Network of National Rapporteurs has consolidated an important legislative framework for eradicating human trafficking. Yet despite the efforts made, the official statistics on human trafficking remain comparable to those of a "rare crime", with just a small percentage of perpetrators convicted and only a few victims saved.

We are firmly convinced that the international community should focus on strengthening law enforcement, establishing a proactive and inclusive identification regime for victims and a comprehensive awareness-raising campaign. At the same time, we need to step up efforts to crack down on the enormous profits generated by traffickers by following financial trails, and use all available investigative tools to prosecute the perpetrators.

The unprecedented levels of human displacement have also revealed the increased vulnerability of potential trafficking victims in refugee and migratory flows. Irregular undocumented migrants are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, making the nexus between trafficking and irregular migration more relevant than ever. While some countries increase border controls to curb migration flows, many migrants turn to organized criminal networks to arrange their border crossing.

Trafficking in women and girls has become a tactic of terrorism, with terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram openly and systematically promoting the trafficking and sexual enslavement of women and girls. To address the nexus between human trafficking, conflict, sexual violence and violent extremism requires a holistic approach. Trafficking as a financial resource for terrorism must not be underestimated.

Greece is a transit country for thousands of migrants and refugees who attempt to cross the Mediterranean and flee war, violence and persecution. As the first entry point for migrants and refugees arriving in Europe, Greece is very well aware of the challenges and of its pivotal role in combating such phenomena.

In this context, we have established a national coordination mechanism as well as a national identification and referral mechanism. Both mechanisms are coordinated by the Office of the National Rapporteur at the Minister for Foreign Affairs and operate as a hub for partnership-building among all relevant stakeholders. The comprehensive protection of vulnerable persons, including women, girls and unaccompanied children, figures high in our priorities. Increased emphasis placed on extending identification procedures in the context of mixed migration and refugee flows.

Human trafficking, this modern form of slavery, has no place in the twenty-first century. We hope that today's debate will mark a flagship event that will urge all competent stakeholders to deploy the imperative human, legal and financial resources to effectively eradicate this heinous form of human rights violation and organized crime. We need to work closely together to promote multilateral cooperation, enhance early-identification procedures and establish robust referral mechanisms, so that victims can address the protection services they so need and deserve.

A consistent human rights and cross-sectoral approach can lead to positive results in counter-trafficking. To that end, we must identify the partnerships to be employed, aiming at protecting vulnerable groups at risk of being exploited or traded. At the same time, we must combat the culture of impunity regarding the high levels of "demand" for "services" related to trafficking.

Let us not forget that the task before us is not merely about implementing laws and penal codes. We aim first and foremost to uphold human dignity amid a world of conflict, poverty and desperation, with vulnerable groups of women and children at high risk of being manipulated, exploited and savagely abused for profit. Traffickers and warlords are relying on our failure to protect vulnerable people.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): I join other representatives in condemning the terrorist attacks that took place yesterday in Russia and in Germany.

Trafficking and forced labour constitute a "heart of darkness" in our world. It is evident that some international terrorist groups are resorting to trafficking in persons to bolster their power, recruitment base and finances. We are concerned that certain State authorities also remain complicit with human trafficking networks to add to the precarious situation of civilians subject to forced displacement.

The nexus between trafficking in persons and other types of organized crime is becoming increasingly manifest. A sustained, coordinated and coherent response by the international, regional and national entities concerned is required to effectively pre-empt and disrupt that nexus, especially when it involves women and children.

To this effect, we take note of the comprehensive resolution 2331 (2016) adopted by the Council today. We would have preferred an inclusive, participatory approach to the draft, considering its importance to the wider membership.

From our national perspective, we wish to underline four points.

First, despite robust counter-trafficking legislations and action plans, prosecution and conviction in trafficking-related cases remain low. There is no alternative to regional and international cooperation in information-sharing and mutual legal assistance. We urge all source, transit and destination countries to accede and adhere to the relevant international legal instruments.

Secondly, human traffickers tend to benefit from the divergences between and discrimination in the systemic and policy responses to immigration and asylum in different countries. The global compact for safe, regular and orderly migration should promote a

regular flow of migration and a sound, global migration governance system that is based on a set of legally binding and non-binding norms and approaches.

Thirdly, the stigma of human trafficking must be shifted from the victims to the perpetrators. Accountability and justice for victims should remain above undue politicization, and the Trust Funds established by the United Nations to support victims must see an enhanced flow of resources.

Fourthly, training and sensitization concerning trafficking in persons in conflict situations would indeed add value to the relevant United Nations peacekeeping operations. Any possible linkage with trafficking in case of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers must be based on credible information and evidence.

In the aftermath of the Andaman Sea refugee crisis in early 2015, we saw that sustained surveillance and awareness-building at the community level are some of the most effective tools against trafficking in persons. Bangladesh remains committed to international efforts to combat that scourge, pursuant to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Convention on Preventing and Combating the Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, among others.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Eloumni (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to extend the heartfelt condolences of the Kingdom of Morocco to the Government and the people of the Russian Federation, as well as to the family of the deceased, Ambassador Andrey Karlov, and to express our outrage against the despicable criminal terrorist attack of which he was the victim, in flagrant and unacceptable violation of human values.

Morocco also condemns the attack yesterday in Berlin, the cowardly 11 December terrorist bombing of a Coptic cathedral in Cairo, as well as the 18 December terrorist attack in the Karak province of Jordan. The Kingdom of Morocco strongly denounces terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations, and reaffirms its unswerving commitment to fighting that scourge.

Allow me to thank Spain for having convened today's debate on this topic, which is a dire one but is timely and topical. Human trafficking is one of the gravest attacks on humankind and a phenomenon that undermines the dignity and value of the human being. It occurs not only during tragedy and disaster, although it is a direct consequence of such events, which also lead to damage to infrastructure, loss of life and lack of food, consequences that receive more attention.

Armed conflict is a breeding ground for human trafficking. During conflict, traffickers take advantage of the lack of normalcy and the rule of law to exploit the existing vulnerabilities of people and act with impunity to finance war, provide sexual services and reduce, if not eliminate, ethnic or religious minorities. Despite efforts deployed to curb the phenomenon, it has reached alarming dimensions in past years. Indeed, well-structured groups run human trafficking using networks that are often hard to dismantle, profiting from the vulnerability and fragility of its victims, most frequently women and children.

While it is true that non-State armed groups have long exploited vulnerable people for sexual purposes, military service and forced labour, those groups, particularly Da'esh and Boko Haram, encourage and run a slave trade of unprecedented dimensions. They openly organize slave markets, using the most modern and sophisticated techniques, notably electronic social networks, to auction off the victims of their trafficking.

In December 2015, the members of the Security Council made human trafficking one of its concerns, under the presidency of the United States of America. Members heard, for the first time, the poignant testimony of Nadia Murad Basee Taha, a Yezidi survivor of sexual slavery at the hands of Da'esh. Today, we should heed her distress call and her appeal for concrete actions to be taken.

The December 2015 presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25 was an important step in that regard. Resolution 2331 (2016), submitted by Spain and adopted this morning and co-sponsored by Morocco, is a historic step for the Council. The Council now has powerful means to reverse that pernicious trend and to help States punish such crimes. We must continue to work on identifying individuals and groups that fund terrorist groups through their sexual trafficking and violence. Recognizing the need to combat that type of crime, Morocco has ratified several international

conventions on the subject, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

In the meantime, the Government of Morocco has undertaken a number of legislative and institutional reforms aimed at providing the Kingdom with a legal arsenal and specific means for strengthening its actions aimed at combating various forms of organized crime, particularly human trafficking, illegal immigration and terrorism. Morocco recently adopted a law on human trafficking, with the aim of adapting national legislation to international standards, particularly the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. That law includes sentence guidelines and preventive measures to protect victims, as well as provisions on institutional measures aimed at combating the phenomenon through the creation of an advisory commission to the Head of Government.

On the other hand, the Kingdom was one of the few countries to have pursued a courageous and proactive policy aimed at regularizing the status of clandestine migrants fleeing conflicts or precarious economic situations. Its policy, based on an integrated and comprehensive humanitarian approach, made it possible for more than 25,000 migrants to integrate socially and economically in Morocco over the past year. On 12 December, King Mohammed VI ordered the immediate launch of the second phase of the efforts to integrate undocumented migrants.

In conclusion, allow me to emphasize the following points. First of all, an effective response to human trafficking must include preventive measures to limit the potential pool of victims. Secondly, we must identify measures to prevent trafficking in persons fleeing conflicts, including the establishment of regular migration channels, respect for the principle of non-refoulement and, where appropriate, a study of their ability to access the labour market in the host country. Thirdly, we must create a human registry, including for those living in camps for displaced persons and refugees, as a means of combating the risks of human trafficking. Finally, we must effectively implement relevant commitments under Goals 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Ms. Bahous (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express our condolences to the Russian Federation and the family of the Russian Ambassador, a victim of terrorism, as well as to Germany and the families affected by yesterday's attack there.

We thank Spain for its efforts as President of the Security Council and for having convened this important debate. We wish them every success. We also thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his report on the implementation of measures to counter trafficking in persons (S/2016/949). With the end of his mandate approaching, I thank him for all of his efforts over the past 10 years and wish him every success in the future.

We welcome the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and her report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/32/41), in which she stresses the importance of the fight against human trafficking, particularly in conflict zones. We also welcome Mr. Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Ms. Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha and Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan, for their briefings.

Last year, we firmly condemned human trafficking in zones affected by armed conflict. Today, the Council adopted resolution 2331 (2016) on that heinous crime, and we hope that it will spearhead international efforts to address human trafficking by terrorist groups. It is certain that human trafficking is the object of attention on the part of the international community because it is an attack on the fundamental rights and dignity of humankind. Terrorist groups carry out the worst forms of slavery. We have heard alarming accounts today of those practices, which are contrary to all our values and principles. The international community must confront that phenomenon, mindful of the fact that such acts lead to disparity and strife, and create a vicious circle of violence.

The large-scale movement of refugees, now an unprecedented flow, is directly related to trafficking in human beings. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* clearly indicates an increase in the number of victims resulting from the conflicts in Somalia, Syria, the

Middle East and other regions of the world. For that reason, there is a need to put an end to violence, so as to preserve the dignity of populations as we put an end to the phenomenon of trafficking.

As an international community, it behooves us to consider the problem in a comprehensive manner. We have faced this challenge for the past few years. A great many of us have focused on certain specific areas and criminal organizations, but what about other terrorist organizations, such as Boko Haram or Al-Shabaab? What we require is a comprehensive, holistic approach that focuses on development in order to ensure that we can pool our efforts to stand behind the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and thereby build a world of peace that is safe and free from violence.

Terrorist groups such as Da'esh, Boko Haram or the Lord's Resistance Army abduct women and children, and force them to become combatants or sell them as slaves. All such actions can be characterized as trafficking in human beings. Today, as we consider the violence carried out against the Yazidis in Iraq by Da'esh, Jordan believes that we need to step up our efforts to fight against trafficking in human beings, especially by terrorist organizations. That will require multifaceted action on all levels — local, regional and international. Within the framework of a strategy for prevention, I would like to mention a few elements.

First, there is a need to confront extremist thought. Da'esh is not a Muslim group. It is a terrorist group, and as such needs to be eliminated. There is a need to spread the values of tolerance and dialogue among religions and faiths, and to disseminate the concept of the Muslim religion as a religion of tolerance. His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein has always stood as a champion and advocate of those values. There is also a need to promote the inclusion of youth in efforts to forge peace and fight against violent extremism. They must also be stakeholders in any decisions that are taken.

Within the framework of the fight against impunity, we welcome the recommendations of the Secretary-General and urge all States that have not yet done so to ratify all the protocols and necessary instruments to ensure that we are in a position to fight against trafficking in human beings through strategies that can face up to the challenge. To that end, we should align the existing criteria and create a database on the phenomenon in areas of conflict. In addition, we should also mobilize all the necessary resources to do so.

My country has legislation that criminalizes trafficking in human beings. My country is also a party to numerous United Nations instruments for the fight against transnational organized crime. We have spared no effort to suppress such crimes by working with all of the relevant parties, as well as through our national, regional and international policies of cooperation. All bodies can contribute to the fight against trafficking in human beings, as well as the protection and rehabilitation of the victims. For example, Jordan, through its coordination with several United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, has created an association for Syrian refugee children, aimed at promoting their education and at providing them with the necessary psychological and social services.

Finally, Jordan will continue to spare no effort to fight against trafficking in human beings, especially that carried out by terrorist groups. We will continue our cooperation aimed at eliminating that phenomenon and at supporting protective measures against that scourge.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to inform those present that, at the present time in our debate, we still have to hear more than 20 people on the list of speakers. I would like to remind speakers to limit their statements to four minutes. I thank them for their cooperation.

I now give the floor to the representative of Paraguay.

Mr. Scappini Ricciardi (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Paraguay expresses its deep sadness and heartfelt condolences to the people and the Government of the Russian Federation in connection with the assassination of Ambassador Andrey Karlov in Ankara, and to the people and the Government of Germany for the attack perpetrated in Berlin. We hope that such terrible acts will not happen again.

We express our gratitude for the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/949). We welcome the initiative of the Spanish presidency to convene this open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. We believe that this open debate will make it possible to become familiar with the opinions of Member States, as well as to try to determine the nexus between that scourge and violent extremism. That information will allow the Organization to design policies to confront those issues in an appropriate and effective way.

The Security Council, as well as all States Members of the Organization, must contribute to establishing an effective system for the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. That system must also take into account mechanisms for dealing with and combating the trafficking in persons and sexual violence in its broadest sense, as well as violent extremism in relation to situations of armed conflict.

We believe that the Security Council must include, in a clear and explicit way, the protection of civilians in armed conflicts in the mandates of peacekeeping operations. In situations in which, owing to the nature of the conflict, those scourges pose significant threats, the mandates must incorporate both preventive mechanisms and protocols to take care of the victims and to ensure the surrender and accountability of the perpetrators.

It is crucial to recall that such violent deeds are exacerbated by restrictive and exclusionary migratory policies, which not only increase the vulnerability of victims but also prevent their identification and access to the medical and psychological services required. In that respect, Paraguay emphasizes the value of the appropriate education and training of contingents in peacekeeping operations, before and after their deployment, on aspects of preventing and combating such problems, as well as on the care for the victims of those crimes. It is critical to prevent the double stigmatization of the victims.

We must collaborate on the system for preventing and combating those scourges. At the same time, we need to provide care for the victims and to ensure the prosecution of those responsible, in a coordinated fashion and with full respect for States' sovereignty and for the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs and in accordance with international law. Paraguay understands that it is also necessary to address the trafficking in persons in conflict situations within the framework of the General Assembly and in connection with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically Goals 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2.

Finally, my country believes that Member States and the United Nations system must cooperate with States in conflict and post-conflict situations so as to reinforce their institutional capacities to effectively confront the challenges involved in combating such scourges.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Ružička (Slovakia): In a few days, millions of people will celebrate the holiday season with families and friends, joyously giving and sharing. Just yesterday, the Security Council was able to adopt unanimously resolution 2328 (2016) to deploy observers to Aleppo — one of many steps to be taken to give millions of refugees and people in need the best gift, namely, a decent life in peace. Only several hours later, we heard about the terrible attacks in Berlin, Istanbul and Zurich. Our feelings and thoughts are with the families and friends of those who perished in those horrible attacks. Our sympathy goes out to our colleagues from Russia, Germany and Switzerland. But, honestly, the four minutes allotted for my intervention will not be enough to name all the countries that have had to experience terrorist attacks just this year.

Yet today we are discussing another phenomenon that is taking, or severely affecting, millions of lives, mostly young ones. Modern slavery is happening all around us in various forms, both in developed and in developing countries, affecting rich and poor societies, albeit in different ways. Human trafficking is the third-largest international criminal industry. It reportedly generates a profit of $32 billion every year. In next four minutes of my statement, it will have generated approximately $250,000. Of the sum total of revenue generated, $15.5 billion is being made in industrialized countries. According to the International Labour Organization, forced labour in the private economy generates an estimated $150 billion in illegal profits annually, which is approximately twice the gross domestic product of my country for 2015.

For every minute that we speak, at least one person is trafficked across international borders. Between 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked every year. Of those, 80 per cent are female or children. Trafficking for forced labour or sexual exploitation or for harvesting tissue, cells and organs represents the cruellest type of international organized crime and is well fuelled by poverty or conflict. We must do more than express our strong condemnation of trafficking in persons. Modern slavery undermines human dignity and human rights and affects human development. Let me make several points — seven, to be exact — that Slovakia considers important in effectively handling this crime.

First, we need to make better use of the existing United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The need to promote the universal ratification of the Convention and to adopt effective national plans and strategies for its implementation is a must.

Second, the Sustainable Development Goals specifically address human trafficking in the targets of Goals 5, 8, and 16. That gives hope that confronting the grave human rights violations that we are addressing today will become a priority for all the countries in the world.

Third, the nexus between trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence is evident. Armed conflict leads to increased trafficking in women and sexual assaults on women and girls. It is crucial that all countries fulfil their international obligations concerning women and armed conflict, such as the commitments in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the milestone resolution 1325 (2000).

Fourth, protecting trafficking victims and saving lives should be of the utmost priority for the entire international community. As stated in the Council's presidential statement issued in December 2015,

> "The Security Council urges relevant United Nations agencies operating in armed conflict and post-conflict situations to build their technical capacity to assess conflict situations for instances of trafficking in persons". (*S/PRST/2015/25*).

In the post-conflict context, we should be able to better protect, assist and support victims. In a post-conflict environment in which law enforcement and the justice system are dysfunctional, the United Nations should take effective measures, while respecting national ownership and the specificities of the country concerned, aimed at offering technical and planning expertise in reforming security and judicial institutions.

Fifth, close cooperation between the United Nations, subregional, regional and cross-regional bodies and initiatives should aim at the establishment of a global and efficient cooperation framework.

Sixth, highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report,

> "Escaping from a conflict zone or arrival at a sought-after destination does not always shield those fleeing conflict from becoming victims of trafficking" (*S/2016/949, para. 5*).

Enhanced attention should therefore be paid to the international protection of refugees and to addressing the special needs of migrants in vulnerable situations. At the same time, we need to step up international efforts to combat the multidimensional root causes of the current refugee and irregular migration crisis and broader forced displacement.

Seventh, the United Nations must seize every opportunity to contribute to conflict resolution. In order to counter the spread and intensity of conflict, renewed commitment to prevention and mediation is needed. Preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts must be stepped up across the whole United Nations system.

Today's adoption of resolution 2331 (2016), which my country co-sponsored, and the adoption, just over a week ago, of resolution 2322 (2016), aimed at enhancing and fortifying judicial cooperation worldwide, are, in our view, necessary steps towards confronting the interrelated global challenges of terrorism and trafficking in persons in conflict situations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg.

Mr. Braun (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank the presidency of Spain for having taken the initiative of organizing this important open debate. I welcome the adoption of resolution 2331 (2016), which was the culmination of broad consultations outstandingly led by the Spanish delegation. The resolution ensures that this meeting will not be without consequences and that human trafficking in the context of conflict situations will remain a priority for the Council and every State Member of the United Nations.

Luxembourg aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union by Ms. Vassiliadou, the Anti-Trafficking Coordinator of the European Union. I would like to make four points.

First, at the United Nations level, we must strengthen the link between combating human trafficking and the implementation of efforts to end sexual violence and grave violations of children's rights in conflict situations. Resolution 2331 (2016) recognizes that link, and we encourage the Security Council and its sanctions committees to implement the provisions

of that resolution, in particular by strengthening information-sharing with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, so as to be able to more effectively punish individuals involved in human trafficking in conflict areas.

At the European Union level, my country is committed to combating human trafficking, which affects vulnerable groups, such as migrants and refugees. Since 16 July 2015, we have provided a naval surveillance plane to Operation Sophia, the European naval force authorized by the Security Council, which contributes to the European Union's efforts to dismantle the economic machinery of trafficking networks and human traffickers in the southern part of the Mediterranean Sea.

At the regional level, in the framework of our chairmanship of the Economic Union of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (Benelux), we have endeavoured to bring together relevant actors, including non-governmental organizations, with a view to better caring for the victims of human trafficking. In particular, we signed a declaration confirming the resolve of the Benelux countries to strengthen cooperation among accommodation and assistance centres for victims of human trafficking, judicial authorities and police agencies, among others.

Finally, at the national level, we are in the process of completing our legislative arsenal. A bill is currently before Parliament that proposes in particular to punish any client soliciting the services of a sexually exploited victim of human trafficking. In the humanitarian area, we ensure that the protection of vulnerable people, including victims of human trafficking, will be included in the programmes that we support in conflict areas.

The poignant account of the victims of human trafficking must motivate all of us to do more at all levels to end that scourge, which is fuelled by war and, in turn, fuels organized crime and terrorist networks. Last Thursday, our Minister for Foreign and European Affairs, Mr. Jean Asselborn, had the honour of welcoming Nadia Mourad and Lamiya Aji Bachar to Luxembourg. Those two Yezidi persons, who had been relegated to the status of slaves by Da'esh, managed to escape from that hell. Today they bear witness to the fate of too many civilians — men, women and children — in Syria and Iraq, but also in Nigeria, Somalia and Central Africa. Let us hear their call.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): Let me start by conveying my condolences to the delegation of the Russian Federation following the tragic death of Ambassador Andrey Karlov, which took place as the result of a terrorist attack in Ankara.

(*spoke in English*)

We also express our sincere condolences to the delegation of Germany in connection with the barbaric terrorist attack that took place yesterday in Berlin, which claimed the lives of innocent people.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Spanish presidency for convening this open ministerial debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations, in connection with the agenda item "Maintenance of international peace and security", as well as for the concept note on the topic (S/2016/1031, annex). Azerbaijan is strongly committed to combating trafficking in persons and other related criminal offences. We share the concern over the scale and number of such challenges. The situation has recently deteriorated owing to increased violence, terrorist activities and humanitarian crises.

Azerbaijan is a party to the relevant international and regional instruments, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. In implementing its international obligations, Azerbaijan has adopted a comprehensive legal framework for effective action against human trafficking and has developed a national action plan aimed at defining the key responsibilities of the competent State bodies and at strengthening and facilitating their coordination. Furthermore, an inter-agency task force, led by a national coordinator, and a specialized police unit within the Ministry of Internal Affairs have been created. Additionally, the national system for the identification of and support to trafficking victims has been established.

In recent years, the need for more international attention and redoubled efforts aimed at combating trafficking in persons has significantly increased. In

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States committed to taking immediate and effective measures aimed at eradicating and ending modern slavery and human trafficking. In its presidential statement of 16 December 2015 (S/PRST/2015/25), the Security Council particularly noted that trafficking in persons undermines the rule of law and contributes to other forms of transnational organized crime, which can exacerbate conflict and foster insecurity. We are concerned that civilian populations are often viewed by armed groups as resources or commodities to be trafficked in, according to the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/949) and the presidency's concept note. As the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, noted in his latest report (A/HRC/32/41), conflicts are prolonged by actors who take advantage of situations of lawlessness to reap personal gain through lucrative activities, such as trafficking.

The international legal framework for combating human trafficking is based on the rules operating within the relevant branches of international law that ensure protection in all situations, including in armed conflicts. Success in fighting criminal activities during conflicts, including human trafficking, requires, first and foremost, strong commitment to the relevant binding obligations, as well as resolve to put an end to unlawful situations and to ensure that dispute settlement and conflict resolution do not serve to prolong and sustain such trafficking. Dispute settlement and conflict resolution must be based on respect for and strict compliance with international law. It is also essential to address conflict-related violations and abuses of human rights through all available means. Strengthening both international and national justice responses are critically important in order to ensure accountability for human trafficking in armed conflict.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bahrain.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain): I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the 24 States members of the Group of Friends United against Trafficking in Persons.

We would like to thank the Spanish presidency for organizing this important open debate and for the opportunity to have a genuine and productive dialogue with Member States. We would like to express our particular gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, President of the Government of Spain, for presiding over this meeting. We also welcome the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mr. Yury Fedotov. We commend the work of many United Nations entities, including the leading role played by UNODC, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Labour Organization, as well as the work of other international bodies, including the International Organization for Migration, whose work has clearly revealed the methodology and motivation of traffickers and the demographics of those who are vulnerable to trafficking. They also gave us an indication of the scale and location of this most serious current problem.

All those present today are united in the conviction that trafficking in persons in armed conflicts is an evil that must be faced and overcome through effective international cooperation. Recent years have made very clear how armed conflicts not only create flows of vulnerable people who are at risk of trafficking, but also spawns terrorist and criminal groups that view people in such situations as resources to exploit and traffic in, so as to bring in revenue and gain power.

The peaceful settlement of armed conflicts is necessary in order to create the proper environment for addressing human rights violations and restoring the physical integrity of the victims of trafficking. That should also be a cornerstone of the mandate of peacekeeping operations. It should be one of the pivotal prerequisites for protecting civilians and combating human trafficking. The Group of Friends United against Trafficking in Persons encourages the strengthening of cooperation between the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons and other international organizations, as well as among Member States. The Group of Friends does that through, inter alia, its role in coordinating and cooperating with the Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings.

The Group of Friends believes that stronger cooperation between Member States and the relevant agencies would result in more effective and rapid responses to the evolving challenges relating to trafficking in persons. By working together and implementing and improving the global strategy for collecting, analysing and sharing data, we can make it easier for countries, non-governmental organizations and international agencies to share accurate information

on a timely basis. That would enable all parties concerned to target resources more effectively in their responses to trafficking — in terms of increasing awareness, investigations and prosecutions and victim identification and support. In that regard, the Group of Friends also encourages the international community, especially donor countries and international financial institutions, to provide the necessary financial resources to the UNODC Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking in order to help it continue with its operations.

The Group of Friends is committed to working together with its partners around the world to eliminate the scourge of human trafficking. We are convinced that the upcoming review of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which will take place in 2017, represents a critical moment in analysing and improving shared international efforts. The international community can be assured of the full support and cooperation of the Group of Friends for an effective review of the Global Plan of Action. We hope that resolution 2331 (2016), adopted today, will provide a strong impetus for establishing counter-trafficking measures in situations of armed conflict, especially the trafficking in persons that is being carried out by terrorist groups.

Despite the important role that the Security Council can play in countering trafficking in persons in armed conflict, we still believe in the leading role of the General Assembly in all matters related to trafficking in persons.

In conclusion, we affirm the commitment of the members of the group to the obligations under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Begeç (Turkey): At the outset, let me reiterate once again our words of condemnation, condolence and solidarity to the Russian and German delegations with regard to the latest terrorist attacks.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2016/949) and our briefers for their presentations. Turkey welcomes the adoption today of resolution 2331 (2016). We also welcome the participation of the President of the Government of Spain, Mr. Rajoy Brey's, in today's discussion.

Human trafficking constitutes a violation of human rights and an offence to the dignity and integrity of human beings. It is also a form of serious transnational organized crime, which bears immense costs on the social and economic fabric of our societies. The grave scale of the humanitarian emergencies, the majority of which are man-made conflicts, is increasing the number of vulnerable people. The rising trends in forced displacement is heightening the risks for the human trafficking of those displaced. Women and children are particularly more affected by these developments.

Meanwhile, the expanding human mobility, which is essentially a positive contribution to our globalized word, brings together new challenges and responsibilities. For this we should better coordinate our efforts against migrant smuggling and human trafficking. The use of human trafficking by terrorist organizations, such as Da'esh, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab in conflict zones, is truly worrying. In connection to this, the nexus between conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking needs to be better understood.

Turkey remains strongly committed to eradicating human trafficking. As a transnational threat, it requires a commensurate and collective response. To this end, Turkey introduced numerous administrative and legal measures in combating human trafficking through prevention, protection, prosecution and cooperation. At the international level, Turkey is a party to the Palermo Convention and its supplementary protocols. At the domestic level, our efforts are focused on two tracks: enhancing our legislation and improving the implementation of our obligations. The National Task Force on the Fight against Human Trafficking was established in 2002, and so far two national action plans in the fight against human trafficking were developed and put into practice. These plans aim to achieve the implementation of international standards in the fight against human trafficking, eradicate the phenomenon in Turkey and strengthen relevant institutions through enhancing harmonization with the European Union acquis.

More recently, a regulation on combatting human trafficking and the protection of victims was published in the *Official Gazette* in March. In order to implement

this in a more effective way, the Department for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking was established under the Ministry of the Interior. The Department is responsible for combatting human trafficking and the protection of victims through the implementation of various projects. One example is a helpline for victims of human trafficking, which was developed in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration. Another example is the dual services, entitled "Victim Support Programme" and "Voluntary and Safe Return Programme", which aim to better assist the victims of human trafficking.

In order to address trafficking in the context of displacement, we should recalibrate our ongoing efforts in line with the commitments that we have undersigned in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. As the biggest refugee hosting country, with over 3 million Syrians and Iraqis, Turkey is undertaking the necessary measures to prevent human trafficking among those who already fled the horrors of conflict.

We welcome the strong condemnation in today's resolution of the activities of Da'esh related to human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence. Turkey remains one of the primary targets of Da'esh's threat and recently faced the most ruthless form of its terrorism. In line with relevant Council resolutions, we have taken comprehensive and effective measures to combat Da'esh's finances and disrupt and prevent this Organization from raising, moving and using funds.

We thank Spain for contributing to the Council's work on trafficking in persons by organizing this debate. Due to its unique geographical location and the proximity to today's conflicts, Turkey will continue to display a decisive and progressive approach to human trafficking.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Onyeama (Nigeria): I would like, at the outset, to express my sincere condolences and total shock at the dastardly assassination of the Russian Ambassador in Turkey. I think this highlights again what we all have to do at the international level to really tackle these terrorist crimes.

The Nigerian delegation thanks you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate and for the well-researched concept note (S/2016/1031, annex) provided to guide our discussion. We also would like to thank our briefers for sharing their perspectives on this important subject.

Conflict situations expose civilians, especially women and girls, to grave dangers, such as human trafficking, sexual violence and slavery. Terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and Boko Haram, operating with complete disregard for international law and international humanitarian law, have introduced a new dimension to trafficking in persons and the sexual exploitation of women and girls.

Their outrageous acts of depravity have shocked the world and drawn unprecedented attention to the plight of women and girls in conflict situations. The war crimes and crimes against humanity that they commit must not go unpunished. We are pleased to state that Boko Haram has been militarily defeated and while some success has been achieved in liberating a good number of the women and girls they held hostage, we shall not relent until all of their hostages are freed and reunited with their loved ones. We acknowledge the important role our neighbours — Benin, Cameroon, Chad and the Niger — are playing in the fight against Boko Haram.

The concept note raises very significant issues and I am pleased to share our perspectives on some of them. With regard to how the Security Council can better integrate the issue of human trafficking in conflict situations in its work, we in Nigeria believe that this could be achieved through enhanced engagement of the Council with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Organization for Migration, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and other relevant actors.

With regard to how the United Nations can work closely together to fight human trafficking in conflict situations and in the context of terrorism while delivering its respective mandates, our view is that this could be facilitated by improved coordination. As different agencies have different capacities in terms of expertise, a coordinated approach would enhance the overall effectiveness of the United Nations in the fight against human trafficking and terrorism.

Concerning how Member States can better implement applicable legal obligations to combat human trafficking, we see aneed for greater commitment to the implementation of relevant international instruments. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and

Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children is a case in point. It not only provides the first agreed international definition of trafficking in persons, but also establishes a framework of obligations and standards for Member States to elaborate national responses to fight human trafficking. Applying those international instruments and relevant domestic laws is crucial to ensuring accountability for those who engage in human trafficking in conflict situations.

If humanitarian action is to effectively support the victims of human trafficking and sexual violence, we see a need for humanitarian agencies to engage the services of relevant experts, while paying special attention to the gender dimension of the problem.

The fight against human trafficking in conflict situations is beyond the capacity of any one State. It requires concerted action at the global and national levels, complemented by the strong leadership of the Security Council. We seize this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to continuing to work with all stakeholders at the multilateral and bilateral levels in our common fight against human trafficking.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Ms. Yparraguirre (Philippines): I wish to thank Spain for convening this open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. I also thank the briefers for their informative presentations.

I share the messages of sympathy expressed in the Chamber today for the victims of the terrorist attacks in Berlin and Ankara.

In the interests of time, I will read an abridged version of the Philippine statement. The complete text will be circulated in due course.

The problem of trafficking in persons in conflict situations is multifaceted as it cuts into other equally pressing issues, such as migration, counter-terrorism, gender-based violence, money-laundering, poverty alleviation and the protection of children. It therefore requires a multifaceted response that seeks to understand the problem from a political, socioeconomic and even cultural perspective, and brings together Governments, civil society and the private sector on both the domestic and international fronts.

The Philippines considers trafficking in persons, including in conflict situations, to be a core national concern. Allow me to share some initiatives that we have undertaken in that area:

First, the Philippines has made the protection of Filipino migrants one of its foreign policy pillars. We endeavour to protect our migrant workers from human trafficking and exploitation by utilizing a victim-centred and human rights-based approach. Recently, we have worked with the United States of America and other partners on the Migrants in Countries in Crisis initiative to improve responses for migrants in countries experiencing conflict or natural disaster.

Second, a solid legal framework, coupled with strong institutions capable of implementing the relevant regulations, is also essential. The Philippines National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons uses a migrant-centred approach to the entire migration cycle — from pre-employment, transit and on-site employment to return migration and eventual reintegration — which has resulted in successful prosecutions of perpetrators of human trafficking.

Third, adopting a one-country team and multi-stakeholder approach that consolidates the mandates, efforts, resources and interests of the duty-bearers and stakeholders to come up with a robust response, has proven to be effective. It has resulted in the mainstreaming of interventions down to the grass-roots level and in promoting awareness.

Fourth, in the context of counter-terrorism, it is important to examining trafficking corridors and the business flow of trafficking. That has enabled the Philippines to strategically locate victims and traffickers in the entire process, especially at critical points of intervention where victims are the most visible and can be rescued; to identify critical points in the business flow to deal the strongest blow to the operations of trafficking syndicates; and to expose and develop strategies to block new means employed by traffickers.

Fifth, in the socioeconomic context and as a prevention measure against violent extremism, poverty alleviation programmes targeting conflict-torn areas should integrate trafficking in persons as an indicator and ensure access to economic services and opportunities, making the victims less vulnerable to trafficking.

Sixth, armed conflict, unstable peace and other situations increase the vulnerabilities of children

and youth to recruitment into civilian armed groups and rebel groups. Government efforts are focused on preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers, vigorously investigating allegations, holding the perpetrators accountable and training front-line officers on appropriate methods to assist children apprehended from armed groups.

Seventh, to mitigate the vulnerabilities of women and children in conflict situations to sexual violence and trafficking, the Philippines has instituted a gender-based violence cluster composed of law enforcers and social welfare service providers that specialize in gender issues. The clusters facilitate access to protective information, psychosocial and trauma-informed care, protective custody, and rehabilitation and reintegration through social programmes, such as education, employment and enterprise.

One challenge today is the lack of accurate data to measure the extent of trafficking in persons in conflict situations. We welcome the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/949) on the development of a data-collection system, whereby Member States can benefit from an international structure that integrates and shares intelligence, studies and mechanisms that would help identify, quantify and assess the prevalence of trafficking in persons in conflict areas, and provide expert advice and technical assistance in the formulation, implementation and validation of programmes, such as the National Action Plan, so that national initiatives are responsive and effective.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. Tenya Hasegawa (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, the delegation of Peru expresses its strongest condemnation of the attacks that took place yesterday in Ankara and Berlin, while also offering its solidarity to the peoples and Governments of Russia and Germany.

Peru commends the Government of Spain on the welcome initiative to organize this open debate and for the submission of resolution 2331 (2016) calling on us to strongly condemn and combat trafficking in persons in conflict situations.

As a democratic State, Peru is respectful of human rights and thus of the supreme value of human life and liberty. That is why, for Peru, human trafficking or slavery in the twenty-first century is a horrendous crime in all circumstances, such as conflict situations. To that end, we must on the one hand prevent such crimes while addressing the ongoing situation by dismantling transnational organized gangs and punishing criminals severely; and on the other, support the physical and emotional rehabilitation of persons affected and restore their freedom, integrity and dignity, with a special focus on the most vulnerable groups, such as children, girl children, adolescents and women.

In that spirit, Peru has been implementing its regulatory framework and public policy to address this crime through, inter alia, a law against trafficking in persons and the illicit migrant trafficking, which criminalizes the practice in its penal code and establishes responsibilities; the National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, which constitutes a public policy instrument; and the National Policy against Trafficking in Persons and All Forms of Exploitation, which has four main pillars: implementation targeted and customized to the local and regional realities of the country; attention to the social and cultural factors that lead to trafficking in persons and the exploitation of individuals; the efficient prosecution and punishment of the crime; and care, protection and comprehensive rehabilitation for the victims.

Nevertheless, we are of the view that any national effort will have limited results if States do not cooperate with one another. Because it is a transnational crime, we believe that prudent, coordinated and integrated approaches among neighbouring States, in particular. As stipulated in paragraph 17 of resolution 2331 (2016), one way to do that is by sharing useful and timely information in order to achieve the desired results. Another approach to international cooperation that could be considered is the one that we refer to as building legal safety belts, based on a set of bilateral agreements. Peru's Foreign Ministry has been employing that approach with our neighbours; to date we have reached agreements with Colombia, Bolivia and Ecuador and we are currently in talks with Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay.

By the same token, we believe that that cooperation must be a corollary to the relations that States could develop with the different entities of the United Nations system. In that regard, we highlight the important role played by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and we hope that that cooperation will continue and extended if possible, in particular in the areas where there have been requests for this crime to be combated.

Peru reaffirms its commitment to combating human trafficking and, in that regard, we have co-sponsored trafficking in persons in conflict situation presented by the Spanish Government as a way to continue to support the various efforts and initiatives to address that important issue.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Roux.

Mr. Roux (*spoke in French*): Let me begin by reiterating our support to the Russian delegation and extending our sympathy and solidarity following yesterday's events.

On behalf of INTERPOL, I thank Spain for having convened today's very important meeting and for allowing us to speak on a subject that is one of our main priorities. INTERPOL is a global institution for police cooperation that is dedicated to supporting its 190 member States in combating the hateful atrocities that violate fundamental human rights. To that end, we have built a dedicated team focused specifically on all aspects of human trafficking. It offers many support and cooperation services in the areas of prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership, both as the central level in Lyon and at regional offices. Our support to member States is above all operational by assisting their police forces in dismantling criminal human trafficking networks that are very active in several regions.

Field operations are preceded by preparatory workshops to ensure that operatives have the skills, qualifications and key resources, as well as the national partnerships and partnerships with non-governmental organizations required to lend support to victims. Between 2009 and 2016, such operational activities have enabled over 3,000 victims to be saved, more than 320 people smugglers to be arrested and over 1,500 police officers and public officials from member States to be trained.

With regard to specific tools and capacities, INTERPOL offers a wide range of services to its member States such as a regularly updated training manual for investigators, red notices for tracing criminals and suspects, locating victims and for collecting information that could be useful in investigations and finally, nominal databases containing information on stolen, lost or forged travel documents, digital fingerprints and an image databank for investigators. Such tools are accessible at border crossings and 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Finally, with regard to coordinating partnership efforts, INTERPOL leads two dedicated working groups: the Group of Experts on Human Trafficking that meets annually and the Specialist Operational Network against Migrant Smuggling. We also organize an annual conference on human trafficking open to both private and public sector stakeholders. The most recent conference was held in Lugano in October and brought together 213 participants. Our 2017 programme is already quite heavy and is focused on training and operational support, in particular in conflict areas, in order to dismantle criminal networks that are operational. We will always be at the service of the Council.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Pedersen (Norway): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

Trafficking in persons is one of the greatest human rights challenges of our time. Such crimes are committed by organized criminal networks and armed groups on an increasingly large scale, sometimes supported by State actors, often with impunity. Billions of dollars are generated each year — money that fuels conflict and hampers development. Human trafficking takes on various forms of exploitation. We know that women and children are particularly vulnerable. Armed groups and criminal networks abuse women and children for sexual slavery, forced labour or as child soldiers. For terrorist groups like the so-called Islamic State, Boko Haram and Al-Qaida, trafficking and slavery are tools to humiliate and frighten enemies and to make money for their operations. We have all seen the horrific reports of abuse from the areas where they operate.

The Secretary General's report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361/Rev.1) documents that smugglers are requiring sex as payment of passage. The report confirms that there is an evolving criminal infrastructure designed to exploit refugees and migrants through human trafficking and sexual slavery. It will require a strong and concerted international effort to oppose such powerful criminal networks. International organizations and instruments such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational

Organized Crime must be better utilized to ensure effective international cooperation across borders and regions. Civil society also has a key role to play. As human trafficking and armed conflicts are converging and becoming global security challenges, we need to develop combined tools from the security and development communities.

We need to improve cooperation through data-sharing and monitoring between countries and across United Nations entities. We need better gender aggregated data and documentation in order to develop effective responses and services for victims of sexual exploitation. The Secretary-General's reports and today's open debate are important steps forward. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also gives us an important platform to tackle trafficking in a more holistic manner. Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peaceful societies specifically calls for the end to abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against and of children.

The Nordic countries are strongly committed to tackling all forms of trafficking and organized crime. We are already deeply engaged in anti-trafficking programmes, in partnership with developing countries and regional organizations. We believe that strengthening multilateral cooperation and partnerships are the only way to put an end to the deadly business of human trafficking.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Haiti.

Mr. Bellerive (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to extend my condolences to the Russian Federation and to Germany following the tragic events in Ankara and Berlin. We firmly condemn such unspeakable crimes.

On behalf of the President and Government of the Republic of Haiti, I thank the Spanish presidency of the Security Council for convening today's high-level debate on human trafficking in conflict situations. I take this opportunity to commend the Spanish presidency of the Council and to offer congratulations on today's highly inspired initiative.

Just a year ago, the Security Council highlighted the adverse effects of human trafficking. Trafficking undermines the rule of law. It promotes other forms of transnational organized crime, exacerbates conflicts, fuels insecurity and accentuates vulnerability. In a word, it attacks fundamental freedoms and human rights.

The intolerable images that reach us from the main theatres of conflict, particularly Syria, but also from all over the Middle East and Africa, speak volumes about the dreadful suffering and vulnerability of children, refugees, displaced families and people uprooted from their homes — potential victims who often become prey to organized criminal intermediaries. The moving testimony this morning from Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan and Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha brought home to us the daily tragedies of people such as the Yazidis in Iraq. Armed conflicts, whether the product of civil war or regional or local conflicts related to terrorism, can result in extreme versions of the consequences of the kind of coercion usually associated with human trafficking.

Even peacekeeping operations are not exempt from human trafficking. Among others, my country — where the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) mandated by the Security Council has been deployed for 12 years — has been targeted by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, who has strongly condemned the rise in cases of violence, abuse and sexual exploitation involving women and children directly related to the deployment of peacekeeping forces in conflict zones. A number of voices have already been raised, particularly in organizations devoted to the defence of human rights, to highlight the inadequacy of stakeholders' responses, including the United Nations, to victims of exploitation in assistance programmes and conflict, post-conflict and reconstruction situations. The intolerable violence done to the victims of trafficking in persons in conflict situations is especially tragic and demands broad, urgent and effective action.

Even if we rightly consider that armed conflicts exacerbate the factors that leave people vulnerable to human trafficking, we must not lose sight of the fact that its underlying causes are poverty, unemployment, the absence of socioeconomic prospects, gender-based violence, discrimination and marginalization, as emphasized in the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The answer to the problem therefore depends largely on the creation of a secure environment and conditions conducive to the socioeconomic development, growth and expansion of individuals and communities. We must therefore tackle the source of the problem.

That is why the Government of Haiti believes that in combating human trafficking, in general, and in conflict situations in particular, it is essential to act simultaneously on two major tracks: accelerating development and strengthening world security, two pillars that are also mutually reinforcing. The Republic of Haiti supports the United Nations in its indefatigable search for solutions to long-standing regional conflicts and to ongoing and potential local clashes that add to the flow of uprooted and displaced persons, refugees and migrants and, as a result, fuel human trafficking. We are in favour of any measure that is likely to contribute to international humanitarian intervention in conflict zones by ensuring better care and protection for the most vulnerable groups, those likely to be prey to organized crime. We particularly support the importance of taking a more realistic approach that focuses on preventing trafficking and exploitation where they are likely problems in areas of transit, crisis or actual or potential conflict.

Similarly, Haiti intends to be fully involved in global action against trafficking in persons, as well as in international and regional mechanisms countering terrorism and organized crime. Over the past few years, in accordance with the Global Plan of Action and the Work Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons in the Western Hemisphere of the Organization of American States, Haiti has enacted a range of measures designed to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, particularly women and children. With the help of the United Nations, including MINUSTAH, the Haitian authorities have implemented various programmes aimed at improving the protection of human rights, including strengthening its judiciary and security forces, which have borne fruit. At the same time, other efforts, focused on reducing poverty, marginalization, exclusion and discrimination have helped to mitigate some of the factors that leave various groups vulnerable to trafficking.

But we are aware that much remains to be done to increase the effectiveness of the fight against human trafficking and protect its victims. Happily, Haiti has just reached an important stage in the process of consolidating democracy and the rule of law with its holding of legislative and presidential elections in November and the forthcoming announcement of a new President of the Republic. The renewed stability of Haiti's institutions is opening new horizons for its people. At this historic turning point, the Government of Haiti hopes that the United Nations will continue to be at its side in order to help it acquire the necessary public infrastructure to pull itself out of the gutter and focus resolutely on growth, sustainable development and improving its living conditions.

Trafficking in persons is a serious threat to humankind and to human dignity and development. I hope that the dialogue begun today in the Security Council will result in concrete, practical recommendations, whose implementation will make a major contribution to intensifying the fight against every aspect of this scourge, one of the worst forms of modern slavery.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Panama.

Ms. Flores Herrera (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to express our solidarity with the victims of yesterday's attacks in Germany, Turkey and Yemen, and to offer our sympathies and condolences to our colleagues from the Russian Federation.

I would like to welcome Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, President of the Government of Spain, to today's open debate and to commend his country for its commitment to bringing to this important forum subjects that are so pertinent to human rights, particularly the one under discussion today, trafficking in persons, on which the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2331 (2016) this morning. We also thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for their important contributions and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, for her thematic report (A/71/303), aimed at raising the international community's awareness of the forms and nature of trafficking in persons in situations of conflict and particularly its effects on women and children. Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, the Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking, is a living example of that.

Panama fully supports international actions based on the commitment of the Palermo Protocol supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which, in defining trafficking in persons, provides us with a common basis for preventing it, punishing offenders and taking measures to protect its victims with a view to dealing with the challenges that this particular kind of organized crime poses for us.

Conscious of its vulnerabilities as a transit route and migration destination, Panama now has a cross-cutting national commission against trafficking in persons that has authority to act in the various different areas where victims need help. We have also worked to make the changes needed to update our legislation so that it can work more effectively to prevent, punish and eradicate trafficking in persons. In November, President Varela Rodríguez renewed Panama's firm commitment to combating what we term modern slavery, which includes human trafficking, after our ratification of the 2014 Protocol of the Forced Labour Convention. It is unthinkable that in the twenty-first century more than 20 million people are victims of this scourge — often double victims, at the mercy of both organized crime and drug trafficking.

The work of international agencies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Organization for Migration is no less important. Their support to States in drafting legislation, building national strategies and assisting with resources for implementing them is very valuable and increasingly necessary. UNODC's Blue Heart Campaign against Human Trafficking, launched in March 2009, has made a positive contribution to raising awareness, encouraging participation and inspiring action.

One of the significant challenges to prosecuting and punishing this crime is the collection of data and evidence, on which we can share best practices with the goal of defeating this increasingly worrying reality that connects us across our borders. Our national commission has reported that in the past two years Panama has dismantled 13 human trafficking organizations, rescued 121 victims and detained 20 traffickers. In addition to strengthening institutions in order to combat trafficking and improving coordination between Government agencies that deal with trafficking, Panama has also conducted awareness-raising and prevention activities, including seminars, workshops for officials and journalists and debates with experts.

Panama believes that the United Nations has a critical role to play in the prevention and ultimate elimination of trafficking. We recommend strengthening the joint work of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, for example, using tools such as the Universal Periodic Review to monitor the implementation of the legal framework for the prevention, treatment and elimination of trafficking in persons in armed conflict.

Finally, it is also timely for us to review preventive action in keeping with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our country is one of the 40 countries that next year will submit its voluntary national review in the framework of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, a platform that we consider essential in reporting not only on human trafficking, but also on human slavery in conflict and post-conflict situations affecting women, children and other minorities.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Montenegro.

Mr. Perović (Montenegro): I would like to thank the Spanish presidency for organizing this timely open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations and for preparing an informative concept note (S/2016/1031, annex). Allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for the manner in which you have conducted the affairs of the Council. I also thank the briefers for their input in the debate.

Montenegro welcomes the adoption today of resolution 2331 (2016) and associates itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union. I would like, however, to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

We have seen how ever country is affected by trafficking, whether it is a country of origin, transit or destination for the victims. The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/949) and the briefings have painted a disturbing picture. We welcome the Secretary-General's report, which notes the linkages between conflict situations and trafficking in persons. It is unfortunate that women and children account for the vast majority of trafficking victims, which also include boys and men, as human traffickers target the most fragile, exhausted, desperate and vulnerable societal groups.

Human trafficking in conflict is a growing concern, particularly in the context of the current migration crisis but also due to the increased use of social media platforms and new technologies to recruit victims. Institutionalized sexual slavery and the forced recruitment of children as suicide bombers and the victims of organ traffickers have become horrifying spirals within this negative phenomenon. The use of slave by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram is not the problem of only certain

countries. Like today's conflicts, the problem has become international and no region is immune.

It is unacceptable that this crime has become one of the fastest-growing activities of transnational criminal organizations, with widespread violations of human rights that are not condemned while those responsible are not held accountable, despite the efforts of the United Nations and other international bodies, Governments and civil society groups. We have to enforce the law and pursue the criminals who exploit victims in a brutal manner. This is a global threat that can be found in many conflict areas and, as such, requires a response at the national, regional and international levels.

In Montenegro, our focus has been on prevention and education, criminalizing trafficking in persons, disrupting criminal and terrorist networks and addressing related crimes. In that regard, we are working closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and in partnership with the International Organization for Migration, UNICEF and the European Union.

We support international peace operations as an efficient and dynamic instrument to promote respect for human rights and build sustainable institutions in conflict areas. In today's conflicts, United Nations peacekeeping operations are more involved in protecting civilians than monitoring ceasefires. That is why peace operations should use new technologies to strengthen their intelligence-gathering capacities. In preparing Montenegrin soldiers to take part in peace operations and activities, the Government office for the fight against trafficking in human beings, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence, conducts regular trainings on the fight against human trafficking.

Montenegro strongly condemns cases of sexual exploitation in United Nations peacekeeping operations, as such criminal activity and abuse have no place under any circumstance in the United Nations flagship activity. It is our collective duty to ensure thorough investigations into those cases, as well as accountability and justice for the victims. Zero tolerance and zero impunity must prevail as our only options in order to avoid tarnishing the credibility of the United Nations once again.

Counter-trafficking activities should start at the outset of any crisis and before evidence of trafficking and exploitation appears. Increased regional and international cooperation and sharing of information are also vital to block criminals from finding safe haven. In that regard, Montenegro has signed cooperation protocols with neighbouring countries Albania and Kosovo.

At the international level, the Security Council's role is highly important, including through the sanctions regime against the Islamic State and Al-Qaida. As the Secretary-General has made clear, the trafficking of women and girls and their sexual enslavement are a source of financing for the Islamic State and a recruitment tool. Every Member State needs to play its part in updating the list of designated individuals and entities that are engaged in trafficking activities.

All victims should see an end to their suffering. They deserve protection and support, as well as justice and opportunity. We therefore need to redouble our efforts at all levels and address that pressing issue in a way that will provide real results on the ground.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): We would like to join others in condemning the terrorist attacks that took place in Ankara and Berlin yesterday. We express our deep condolences to the Russian Federation and to Germany.

Kazakhstan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain on behalf of the 24 States members of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking.

We commend the tireless efforts and special expertise of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other relevant United Nations system organizations. We also value UNODC's able coordination of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons and sound management of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. We support strengthened coordination between the Inter-Agency Coordination Group and Member States to enhance the effectiveness of the response to the current challenges of human trafficking.

We reaffirm our commitment to the landmark United Nations Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, as well as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and

Children, supplementing the Convention to direct coordinated and inclusive responses. We therefore call upon Member States to universalize the ratification of all relevant anti-trafficking legal instruments.

The threat posed by terrorist organizations is a matter of special concern for Kazakhstan. General Assembly resolution, 70/291 on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy review, recognized the nexus between trafficking in persons and terrorism. Human trafficking is a critical component of the financial flows of terrorist groups and money-laundering by organized crime networks, which pose a threat to international peace and security. Hence, we urge States to mobilize a stronger and more vigilant global response.

We believe that it is critical and mandatory to train all peacekeeping and other personnel deployed in conflict and post-conflict zones to respond effectively to trafficking in persons, with training in gender sensitivity and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, especially those perpetuated by peacekeepers. Peace and development are the foundations of stable society and human well-being, and need enormous resources for poverty eradication, education, employment and provision of services. Kazakhstan has therefore proposed that Member States consider allocating annually 1 per cent of their defence budget to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Fund.

At the national level, Kazakhstan is addressing human trafficking by accelerating the work of its interagency commission, in close interaction with non-governmental organizations and relevant international organizations as part of the fourth cycle of its 2015-2017 national plan.

At the regional level, we interact in an effective manner with the Commonwealth of Independent States through its 2014-2018 regional programme and with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as a part of the OSCE Alliance against Trafficking in Persons. Kazakhstan has also initiated the Almaty Process, which serves as a platform for nine countries of the region to annually step up their response and enhance cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration.

As an incoming non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2017-2018, Kazakhstan is pleased to support resolution 2331 (2016) and reaffirms its strong commitment to reaching visible results in combating trafficking in human beings.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Mendonça e Moura (Portugal). I would like to thank the Spanish presidency for convening this ministerial open debate and congratulate you, Mr. President, on the adoption of the first Security Council resolution on trafficking in human beings in situations of conflict, which my country is proud to co-sponsor (resolution 2331 (2016)).

I thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Ms. Zainab Bangura, Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, for their briefings.

Trafficking in human beings is one of the most serious violations of human rights and constitutes an offence to the dignity and integrity of the human being. Every year, millions of men, women and children are victims of human trafficking for exploitation, which includes prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor and services, slavery and similar practices, involuntary servitude, and removal of organs and other forms of exploitation. It is a complex reality, transnational in most cases, often committed within the framework of criminal organizations, which prey on vulnerabilities and weaknesses of trafficked persons. Trafficking in human beings is often exacerbated in situations of conflict and humanitarian crisis and aggravated by factors such as poverty, unemployment, weak rule of law and poor governance.

We note with concern that trafficking in persons in situations of conflict-related sexual violence has become a war tactic by violent extremist groups. It turns individuals into commodities, dehumanizes them and exacerbates the multiple and protracted harmful effects of conflict-related violence on victims. And it must be stressed that a consistent mark of this crime is that most victims are women and girls.

Any intervention, to be effective, must be based on common and coordinated efforts in the fields of prevention, awareness-raising, support, research and repression at the international, regional or national levels. Bilateral, regional and international cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as effective information-sharing, are crucial to

addressing human trafficking resulting from conflict. It is a global issue that demands collective action, not only from national Governments, but also from the international community, civil-society organizations, media, academia and other stakeholders.

The crime of trafficking in persons is generally underreported and underrecorded. The overwhelming majority of victims of trafficking never see justice for what they have endured, nor receive the assistance and support they need. We must fight the culture of impunity for those who commit these crimes; those responsible must be brought to justice. To this end, law-enforcement and other officials need to be trained to identify and protect victims, and traffickers and their accomplices need to be prosecuted, and justice for victims needs to be secured.

Portugal urges all delegations that have not yet done so to accede and ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Protocol provides a broad basis for policies to address the issue and requires countries to take action against the traffickers, protect and assist the victims and help prevent trafficking. My delegation looks forward to the high-level review of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, set to take place in 2017.

In 2007, with the involvement of several sectorial ministries, the private sector and civil-society organizations, we in Portugal developed its first National Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings. In 2008, we created the Trafficking in Human Beings Observatory with the goal of collecting and analysing data on trafficking. Our third National Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings, for 2014-2017, is currently being implemented and entails 53 policy measures focused around five strategic areas: first, prevention, awareness-raising, information and research; secondly, education and training; thirdly, protection, intervention and capacity-building; fourthly, criminal investigation; and fifthly and finally, cooperation. The third National Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings reflects my country's commitments, in particular within the framework of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. The national efforts developed by Portugal in combating trafficking in human beings have been recognized in several forums, and most recently by the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

In conclusion, trafficking in human beings is one of the most heinous crimes against human dignity. Preventing and punishing trafficking in human beings is crucial to achieving a future of dignity, freedom for all and sustainable development, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and our collective efforts aimed at consolidating peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Mawe (Ireland): Human trafficking is not always the first thing that comes to mind when we think about violent conflicts. Often our news stories and our attention spans are consumed with images of bombings, tanks and refugee camps. But the link between trafficking and conflict is a major issue in need of our attention.

Last December's presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25,on trafficking in persons in situations of conflict, was an important achievement. First, it reaffirmed that human trafficking must be considered in the context of threats to international peace and security. Secondly, it asserted a role for the Security Council in consolidating the international response to this challenge.

We thank Spain for organizing today's important debate and align ourselves with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union. We also join with all delegations in expressing solidarity with the victims of yesterday's terrorist attacks. In my national capacity, I will outline four areas of opportunity for a stronger international response to trafficking in conflict.

The first area is the pursuit of accountability for conflict-related sexual violence. The link between human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence is irrefutable. We have seen it in horrific cases involving the trafficking and sexual abuse of women by the so-called Islamic State and Boko Haram. There are also less reported cases, including many on the sexual exploitation by illegal traffickers of those who are fleeing war zones. In addition to being linked through causes, or points of origin, there are more invidious links, ones that we can do something about. One link is accountability, or the lack thereof. A clear thread exists between conflict-related sexual violence and human

trafficking because impunity for one allows the other to flourish.

The Security Council can act as an important accountability mechanism in this respect. At its most simple, let us have incidents of trafficking called out in this Chamber where we see them occurring. In addition, the Council can serve to bolster other accountability measures, for example, by supporting Special Representative Bangura, by active deployment of women-protection advisers in peacekeeping missions, by referring cases to the International Criminal Court, and by supporting regional and national systems of accountability.

The second area is preventing the conditions conducive to human trafficking. We have seen clearly that war acts as a potent catalyst to human trafficking. It breaks down institutional and social protections, and it leaves masses of people vulnerable to traffickers. It is startlingly obvious, therefore, that greater focus by the international community on preventing conflicts and stopping their reoccurrence would have a direct impact on human trafficking. Prevent the conflict and you prevent the trafficking.

We call for increased momentum in putting our words about conflict prevention and peacebuilding — which are often heard in this Chamber — into practice. We welcome a stronger role for the Peacebuilding Commission and regional institutions in informing the Security Council about human trafficking in conflict situations, and we look to the Secretary-General-designate to maximize his good offices in advancing conflict prevention.

The third area involves partnerships that extend beyond the Security Council. Trafficking has mobility at its core. It transcends borders and jurisdictions. It presents far too big a challenge for any one entity to confront. Although the issue of human trafficking in conflict should indeed be addressed by the Security Council, we will also need to look beyond the Chamber to find a comprehensive solution. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals will be crucial in this regard. It will mean a focus not only on target 8.7, which addresses modern slavery and human trafficking directly, but also on Goal 5, to ensure women's empowerment, and Goal 16 to prioritize the building of strong and inclusive institutions.

To achieve this, partnerships must be fostered between the United Nations and regional systems, many of which have developed comprehensive strategies on this issue. For example, as Member States work to implement the Palermo Protocols and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, they will play a crucial role in comprehensively addressing human trafficking. Trafficking is an egregious violation of people's human rights and we are encouraged that the United Nations human rights bodies are taking an increasingly comprehensive approach to human trafficking.

Finally, a stronger response needs to place the needs of the most vulnerable at its core. Through our support to Justice Rapid Response and UN-Women, we heard last year harrowing accounts of investigations into sexual violence and human trafficking by Boko Haram. Many victims were too traumatized to speak to interviewers about their ordeals. In some cases, they were more concerned about shelter, food or their own personal safety than about the investigation. For them, justice meant more than a prison sentence for their abusers.

Uncomfortable though it may be, we need to hear these accounts. We need the participation of those who have survived or who are most vulnerable to human trafficking in conflict, and in crafting our response we need to put them at the centre. This applies in particular to women, but also to young people, including former child combatants. The participation of civil society, academia and the private sector will also be crucial to stemming flows of human traffic.

We are grateful to Spain for working to ensure that the Council remains focused on this issue. However, as we have noted, our response must include and extend beyond the Security Council if we are to finally end human trafficking in conflict.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Al Saad (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to extend the condolences of my country to the Russian Federation and Germany for the unfortunate incidents that took place recently. We resolutely condemn those terrorist attacks.

I would like to thank the President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, for organizing this important open debate. I should also like to extend our thanks and appreciation for the President's efforts in ensuring the success of this

important debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and its agencies to eradicate this crime by enacting relevant laws and regulations and mobilizing international efforts to combat this phenomenon. Our meeting today to discuss this topic is a clear reflection of those efforts. We are hopeful that this debate will help us find solutions to this problem, address its root causes and put in place a future plan to ensure its full eradication.

Our meeting is taking place to discuss a crime that is condemned by the entire world. It is a blatant violation of human rights. Regrettably, the majority of its victims are women, girls and children. Almost all countries around the world are affected by this phenomenon — whether as countries of origin, transit or destination. Owing to the numerous conflicts around the world, this crime has been on the rise recently and has taken on various forms. Countries around the world and specialized international organizations have sought to develop their tools and enact laws to deter this crime and reduce its social, economic and psychological impact.

At the national level, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has sought to combat trafficking in persons at the legislative, organizational and institutional levels, in addition, to other national efforts and measures to prevent crimes of trafficking in persons, prosecute and punish its perpetrators, protect its victims and enhance international cooperation with countries and relevant regional and international organizations. A law to combat trafficking in persons was promulgated in my country in 2009. That legislation constitutes an important step forward in our efforts to combat these types of crimes. Countries around the world know full well how important it is to enact legal texts that prohibit those practices and punish its perpetrators.

My country has also established a standing committee for combating trafficking in persons under its human rights commission. Its members include representatives from Government bodies to coordinate national efforts to combat trafficking in persons and put in place plans to address them, as well as put forward recommendations that ensure that no violations are committed against categories targeted by trafficking in persons. The commission is tasked with following up on the implementation of the recommendations.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has ratified many relevant international instruments, notably the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two Protocols — the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air — as well as other International Labour Organization conventions, in particular Conventions No. 182 and No. 209. Furthermore, we have ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Slavery Convention of 1926 and its subsequent protocol.

The number of conflicts throughout the world has increased, especially in the Middle East. That has led to a significant rise in crimes related to the trafficking in persons, especially against displaced Syrians fleeing conflict zones. Unfortunately, human traffickers have exploited the dire need and the desperate humanitarian situation of victims, who are often forced to compromise their dignity and their humanity and who fall prey to criminals who exploit their bodies for financial gain.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would like to stress its firm rejection of all forms of trafficking in persons under any pretext. We have stepped up our national efforts to fully eradicate that crime by enacting relevant laws and regulations, cooperating tirelessly with the international community to eliminate trafficking in persons, and ratifying relevant international instruments and conventions.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Nyago (Uganda): I shall begin by expressing Uganda's condolences to the Permanent Missions of Russia and Germany for the tragedies that befell their nationals yesterday.

Furthermore, I bring warm greetings from His Excellency President Museveni of Uganda, who has sent his apologies for not being able to come and participate personally in this important debate due to other, previously planned duties. He extends his greatest appreciation to you, Sir, for the honourable invitation extended to him to participate in this debate on a topic that is so critical to Uganda.

My delegation also appreciates the briefings delivered by the Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, and other briefers.

Trafficking in persons in conflict is perhaps one of the most challenging evils that the world is currently confronted with, and the organization of this debate is very timely in providing an opportunity to Member States to share insights into how the challenges being encountered in countering this scourge can be effectively addressed.

Uganda happens to be in a region that has experienced a lot of conflict, which has exacerbated the problem of human trafficking in our region. The conflicts in our region have made the majority of our people, particularly women and children, vulnerable to organized criminal networks that take advantage of our weak institutions in immigration and the judiciary to engage in the trafficking mainly of women, children and other vulnerable people across borders to far distant places. The conflicts in the Central African Republic, the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and, more recently, South Sudan continue to expose the most vulnerable sections of our population to the criminal networks that traffic in them for mainly cheap labour, sexual exploitation and, in other cases, slavery.

A number of reports have recently revealed some of the most horrific experiences that the children and women who have been trafficked go through in some of the countries where they end up being sold as objects. Uganda itself has been a victim of this scourge, whereby some our children, particularly girls and young women, who have been trafficked have endured torture and sexual abuse at the hands of their tormentors. Our Government recently set up an interministerial committee, coordinated by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, to investigate these abuses and to devise appropriate measures that can be undertaken to effectively address the problem. This is in addition to various other interventions that the Government has made in the past to address this challenge.

One of the major steps that needs to be undertaken by Member States, with the support of the international community, is the harmonization of legislation that comprehensively provides for judicial mechanisms to harshly punish and deter offenders and would-be offenders, and for there to be a coordination mechanism for their enforcement. Such efforts will require the strong support of this organ.

Given the transnational nature of this crime, it requires the combined efforts of the international community to decisively address this problem. As ably amplified in the concept note provided by the Spanish presidency for this debate (S/2016/1031, annex), trafficking in persons in conflict is closely intertwined with other transnational organized crimes, such as money-laundering and international terrorism. The financial resources that accrue from human trafficking enable money-laundering to thrive and in turn largely contribute to funding terrorist activities. And the cycle continues.

It is therefore evident that this requires a holistic approach that addresses the interconnectedness of these vices in our societies. Working together through the Security Council by adopting a resolution with effective measures that address the vices of human trafficking, money-laundering and terrorism in a holistic manner would help to send a strong message to the perpetrators of these crimes and to undermine and curtail the capabilities of their networks to execute these criminal activities.

In the same vein, the efforts of the international community aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict would help to deny these networks the conducive environment in which they thrive. That is why Uganda continues to play a key role in the region in fighting terrorism in Somalia and the Central African Republic, and in engaging with partners to address the conflicts in our neighborhood. Uganda continues to be a champion of pan-Africanism, with a strategic objective of eliminating conflicts and associated vices in our region so that we can embark on the road to peace, peaceful transformation and prosperity for our people.

Uganda associates itself with the efforts of this organ to address the problem of trafficking in persons in conflict, and pledges to work together with our international partners in supporting measures aimed at eradicating it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Ms. Bakurmutsa (Rwanda): At the outset, I express Rwanda's deepest sympathies to Russian Federation for the heinous assassination of Ambassador Andrey Karlov.

Let me thank the Spanish presidency for convening this important debate and welcome the purposeful adoption today of resolution 2331 (2016), which we co-sponsored.

The trafficking in persons in conflict situations is a problem that magnifies the necessity for international peace and security in both conflict and post-conflict situations. Human trafficking is a global security threat that directly affects the vulnerability of displaced people and refugees. It is compounded by conflicts, civil unrest, persecutions and human rights violations. We must not lose sight of its expansive nature and recognize that most countries of destination for trafficked victims are not enduring conflicts. Therefore, it is important to combat this crime in the countries of origin, transit and destination. The victims, especially children and women are targeted by criminals, many of whom belong to transnational organized crime networks, for sexual exploitation, slavery and other forms of exploitation.

Rwanda has developed national legislative and institutional measures and is taking an active role regionally in the East African cooperation framework commissioned to devise mechanisms to prevent human trafficking, protect victims and bring perpetrators to justice. This is a laborious undertaking, for Rwanda is susceptible to human trafficking by being situated in a region experiencing sustained armed conflict. At the international level, Rwanda is a State party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention. Rwanda co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 71/19, on Cooperation between the United Nations and INTERPOL.

Before concluding, I would like to make two final points.

First, we must do more on at the local, regional and international levels to combat human trafficking by working closely with partners across the spectrum to strengthen legislative and punitive measures that efficiently target the speed and scope of the network of traffickers we are up against. The reality before us is that we cannot afford to stand idle in the face of human trafficking.

Secondly, and I think most importantly, we encourage all Member States, civil institutions and the private sector to support the fight against human trafficking on all fronts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Eritrea.

Mr. Giorgio (Eritrea): Allow me at the outset to convey my deepest sympathies to the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation on the assassination of Ambassador Andrey Karlov in Ankara, and to the Permanent Mission of Germany on the tragic attack on innocent civilians in Berlin. Our thoughts are with the bereaved families.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Bahrain, who spoke on behalf of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking.

My delegation wishes to thank Spain for organizing this open debate of the Security Council on trafficking in persons in conflict situations, in connection with the agenda item "Maintenance of international peace and security". Trafficking in persons is a transnational crime that affects almost every nation, given its negative implications for peace and security and its contribution to grave violations of the basic rights and dignity of the victims. Therefore, Eritrea views today's open debate as giving important impetus to the global fight against the scourge of human trafficking.

It is clear that this is limited in its scope. Nevertheless, we would like to see it as part of national, regional and global efforts to address trafficking in persons. Resolution 2331 (2016), adopted today, decides

> "to take decisive and immediate action to prevent, criminalize, investigate, prosecute and ensure accountability of those who engage in trafficking in persons" (*resolution 2331 (2016), para. 2 (b)*).

This particular paragraph points to the direction of what Eritrea has been asking of the United Nations for the past few years, since 2013. It is critical, however, that the investigations carried out be independent and transparent.

Given the complex and multidimensional nature of the crimes of human trafficking, strengthened coordination among the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, Member States and other stakeholders would contribute to the much-desired outcome.

It must be underscored that human trafficking has recently become more acute along migration routes, where vulnerable communities and individuals continue to be subjected to sexual violence, degrading treatment, organ harvesting, murder and kidnapping for ransom. This highlights the fact that the problem of trafficking has further evolved. In this regard, as the United Nations is about to embark on the review of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Eritrea believes that, with the much-improved understanding and experiences gained over the past 10 years, the Global Plan of Action will play a stronger and more critical role in harnessing collective action to advance the fight against human trafficking.

Mindful of the gravity and urgency of the problem, Eritrea has acceded to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention. Eritrea is also taking concrete steps to contribute to the fight against human trafficking by establishing a legal and institutional framework, including by dismantling criminal networks. Moreover, it is also actively involved in the Khartoum process and other projects to address the scourge, including in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Recognizing that trafficking in persons is a transnational criminal enterprise with annual revenues amounting to about $150 billion, it is imperative to flesh out the underlying causes and intertwined dimensions of the problem in order to find effective and durable solutions to the crime.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Ms. Sapag Muñoz de la Peña (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a pleasure, Sir, to see you presiding over this meeting. I would like to convey our condolences to the Russian Federation. Chile deeply deplores the events that took place.

This complex and diverse transnational phenomenon should be addressed from a holistic, coordinated perspective through the system, including in the Council and its subsidiary bodies, as it is linked to the central themes of its agenda, such as the protection of civilians in armed conflict; women and peace and security; children and armed conflict; and the financing of terrorism.

The use of victims of trafficking in combat, sexual exploitation and forced labour has very much become a hallmark of armed conflict and humanitarian crises. The link between sexual violence and trafficking is plain to see. We have watched with horror how armed groups use sexual violence, the commercialization and the enslavement of girls and women as a tool of terrorism and a source of financing. Our repudiation of these acts must be unequivocal and compelling and must be backed up by measures to prevent them and to provide rehabilitation and reintegration to the victims.

The exponential growth of migratory flows and internal displaced people — the figures today are higher than at any other time since the Second World War — has been fuelled by humanitarian crises associated with the worsening of existing conflicts and violent actions by non-State groups. In that respect, as part of the Arria Format meeting organized by Australia and Chile in 2014, we identified the need to urgently promote political solutions to the challenges that States and the international system face in addressing migratory governance and the situation of vulnerable groups exposed to trafficking, such as internally displaced persons. This debate is a response to this call.

It is vital to create and raise awareness of this scourge to prevent it, prosecute traffickers, protect the victims of trafficking and rehabilitate and reintegrate them, as we said earlier, and finally to eradicate human-trafficking in conflict situations.

The Council has the ethical and political responsibility to firmly support the efforts of the international community to that end, including compliance with the relevant conventions and protocols, as well as with resolutions 2195 (2014) and 2253 (2015), which address the relationship between organized crime, including human trafficking, and terrorism. We are in favour of better coordination and cooperation between national judicial systems and the United Nations system in order to dismantle criminal networks and bring to justice those who profit from trafficking.

With respect to specific measures to meet the aforementioned goals, together with supporting those measures contained in resolution 2331 (2016), which we co-sponsored today, we propose the following.

First, we must promote exchanges between specialized agencies, peacekeeping operations and United Nations peacebuilding stakeholders so as to address the fragmentation that exists in this sphere.

Secondly, we must address human trafficking linked to the exploitation of mineral resources and promote effective measures relative to the supply chain, such as the commercial due-diligence guidelines on minerals from conflict zones, where many women, boys and girls are forcibly employed.

Thirdly, we must incorporate the issue of the trafficking of women and girls in conflict in the agenda of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, known as the 2242 Group, created by Spain, since this is considered to be a challenge in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Fourthly, we must ask the groups of experts of the sanctions Committees to include human trafficking in their reports to those Committees in order to assist with the work of the Council in the event of the adoption of the targeted sanctions included in resolution 2331 (2016).

Finally, and fifthly, I ask the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to tackle this scourge in their reports to their respective subsidiary bodies, given, inter alia, that these components can constitute an early-warning sign that can help to detect and prevent future crimes against humanity.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Saikal (Afghanistan): I would like to thank the Spanish presidency for convening today's open debate on a topic of crucial importance, which demands the urgent attention of the international community.

Human trafficking constitutes a grave violation of international law, including international humanitarian law. It violates the fundamental values and principles we hold dear, such as justice, equality and human rights for all. Over the past several years, the world has seen human trafficking continue unabated in different parts of the world, especially in countries stricken by conflict and facing violent extremism. That has many causes: to generate illegal profits in the criminal economy; to enlist people in illegal armed groups; and to impose forced labour and slavery upon the innocent and have them carry out terrorist attacks in different parts of the world.

Human trafficking is particularly prevalent in countries stricken by conflict and strife, especially those that continue to suffer at the hands of terrorists and extremists. We have witnessed a continuing trend where many terrorist and extremist groups — such as the Taliban, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Da'esh and Al-Qaida, among others — increasingly resort to human trafficking to advance their evil agendas. In our region, as well as in Africa and the Middle East, extremist groups have abducted men, women and children as a means to finance and conduct their criminal activities. In many cases, women and girls in particular have been put up for sale to mobilize financial resources and fund military operations. Such despicable activities represent the most evil of human actions.

The inextricable link between human trafficking and terrorism remains a serious source of concern that demands urgent attention by the international community. We believe that addressing some of the underlying factors driving violent extremism should not be separate from ending the problem of human trafficking. In various conflict situations, especially in our region, a multitude of terrorist and extremist groups, including the Taliban, its Haqqani Network and Al-Qaida, still enjoy sanctuary and safe havens, alongside material and financial support, which have reinforced their operational capability to continue their reign of terror against innocent people.

One of the best ways to address human trafficking is to prevent conflict from arising in the first place and to resole them wherever they occur. In doing so we will avoid the enabling environment that fuels the problem of human trafficking. The Security Council should take necessary measures to identify and address the lingering problem of continued support for extremists as a means to advance political objectives. More focus should be placed on ensuring that States comply with their counter-terrorism commitments and obligations on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

As a front-line State in the fight against global terrorism and extremism, we assure the Council and the international community at large that our struggle against those twin menaces will continue unabated, and with firm resolve. As we speak, our national security forces are engaging a multitude of international extremist groups that pose a serious threat to the civilized world.

The United Nations Global Plan of Action to Prevent Trafficking in Persons and the United Nations

Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, remain the overall international framework for decisive action to combat human trafficking in all its aspects. Afghanistan is a party to the Convention and has put in place several pieces of legislation to criminalize various forms of human trafficking. In addition, we are grateful to the United States Agency for International Development for its project on combating human trafficking in Afghanistan, which is co-funded by the International Organization for Migration. The project works with our Government to effectively prevent trafficking, prosecute traffickers, protect victims and improve regional coordination to combat cross-border trafficking.

The problem of human trafficking is wide-ranging and has various components. The unprecedented flow of migrants and refugees, mainly from countries facing conflict, has left millions of people vulnerable to human trafficking throughout the world. In that context, we are pleased that the joint declaration adopted at the conclusion of the summit meeting on migration here in New York in September placed due focus on preventing human trafficking.

Today's meeting of the Security Council highlights the fact that the trafficking of persons constitutes a crime against humanity and that any individual or groups involved in that heinous practice must be brought to justice. We hope this meeting will also serve as a reminder for all that additional progress is required to implement their commitments and obligations, not only as matter of legal responsibility but also as a moral imperative.

Finally, we concur with previous speakers that the problem of human trafficking in conflict situations should not be seen in isolation from the global fight against terrorism. Hence, it is imperative that States spare no effort whatsoever to implement the relevant counter-terrorism resolutions of the security Council and of the General Assembly. In that context, the relevant States must prevent the cross-border movement of terrorists and cut off the flow of financial resources and other enablers that have thus far sustained extremist activity. We hope the outcome of today's meeting will revitalize the global fight against a menace that constitutes a crime against humanity and a challenge confronting us all.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Gone (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): First and foremost, allow me begin by conveying the deepest condolences of the Ivorian Government to the Governments and the peoples of Germany and Russia for the terrorist attack in Berlin and the assassination of Ambassador Andrey Karlov, respectively.

I would like to congratulate the Spanish presidency on convening this high-level open debate on the important issue of trafficking in human beings in times of conflict. Allow me also to extend my thanks to the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict for their contributions to today's debate.

The news today, as well as the poignant testimonies we heard this morning, reveal the extent to which trafficking in persons in times of conflict, owing to its magnitude, crimes and irreparable trauma it causes, constitutes a genuine denial of human rights, and must as such serve to mobilize the attention of the entire international community.

Resolution 2331 (2016), which the members of the Security Council adopted today, is a particularly relevant instrument to combat this scourge, while it also serves to bolster existing initiatives such as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's zero-tolerance policy.

In addition to the efforts of the the Security Council, the international commitment against trafficking in human beings in times of conflict must also be translated into vigorous regional and national initiatives based on existing multilateral legal frameworks. Since 2002, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to which my country belongs and which is affected by this phenomenon, has regularly adopted several action plans, the latest of which covers the period 2016-2020. Those plans propose, inter alia, the adoption of national legislation penalizing trafficking in persons, measures to protect and assist victims and public awareness campaigns. It should be emphasized that the strategic and operational support of UNODC to ECOWAS has made a significant contribution to the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons in West Africa. This is an opportunity for my delegation to thank the United Nations for its multifaceted support

through UNODC in the implementation of the ECOWAS Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons.

In line with that regional strategy, on 25 October 2012 Côte d'Ivoire ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and endorsed the Additional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons. It also adopted Law 2010-272 on the prohibition of trafficking in persons and the worst forms of child labour and the September Law on combating trafficking in persons. The Ivorian Government also believes that the fight against trafficking in persons in times of conflict and in times of peace must be a holistic one. To that end, my country has set up a national multisectoral committee to combat human trafficking and has drawn up a national strategy, accompanied by a five-year national action plan for the period 2016-2020.

Although the correlation between epicentres of conflict and the surge in trafficking in persons appears to be undeniable, it is important to bear in mind the economic and social dynamics that fuel this scourge, including poverty, unemployment, the lack of prospects for young people and the shortcomings of judicial and police institutions. Such deficits call for greater and more vigorous action on the part of the United Nations to support the improved coordination of national and regional strategies and the strengthening of the human and operational capacities of judicial and police institutions. It is also important to support the affected States in the creation of databases to better identify the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, on the one hand, and on the other to develop appropriate strategies for dismantling the criminal networks involved and improving the assistance given to victims.

In closing, I would like to state that accountability must be the international community's best response to grave human rights violations in order to prevent future abuses.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more speakers inscribed on the list. I thank representatives for their support and, in particular, for the kind words to the presidency of the Council.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.